GENERAL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
NEW YORK

GEORGE BUCHANAN REDWOOD
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25 SEP 1929

A PADRE IN PARAGUAY

DETAIL OF THE IGUAZÚ FALLS.

Frontispiece.

A PADRE IN PARAGUAY

BY

C. E. NEWBOULD

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LONDON
SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING
CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE
NEW YORK AND TORONTO : THE MACMILLAN CO.

278.9
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First published 1929

CITY LITERARY
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NEW YORK

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

PREFACE

The following pages contain sketches of the life of an Anglican chaplain in the interior of the South American Continent.

From a very full life, scenes and incidents have been chosen to suggest the atmosphere, the natural background of work, so that a vivid picture of the little known regions of tropical South America may be obtained.

The writer spent twenty years working in the vast diocese of Argentina and Eastern South America, and therefore speaks with considerable knowledge of the lands and people portrayed.

It is, however, chiefly for his many friends that this little book is modestly issued—and with the hope of making more friends.

Toc H.: Mark III.,
York Road,
London, S.E. 1.

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A PADRE IN PARAGUAY

CHAPTER I

ARGENTINA AND AGUAS ARRIBA

"PAMPA" is a Quichua Indian word meaning plain, not necessarily the Argentine prairie land rolling from the Andes to the sea, but any level space, however restricted; and so amongst the mountains we have "Cachi Pampa," "Pampa Blanca," etc.

The scene of my first ministerial labours, however, was at Junin, a little town in the vast Argentine "camp," about one hundred and twenty miles west of Buenos Aires, where in 1902 we opened a Church of England day school for the benefit of the English people employed in the railway "shops." It was then a place of eight or nine thousand inhabitants, who crowded into one-storied, flat-roofed houses, built up close against each other and the street pavement, and with ugly iron gratings protecting every window. The streets radiated from a central "plaza," or square, and soon lost themselves in the rank and dusty grass of the pampa.

The town had a character of its own. Its origin was the erection of a fort to check the Indian raids, not yet ceased within the memory of people still living. Indeed, in my time the squalid remnant of a tribe of aborigines squatted on a piece of land apparently reserved for them by the landowner—a strikingly generous provision, all things considered! They lived in tents made of hides, and rags of civilisation

hid their tawny bodies. Some of them were tattooed with circles and spirals on cheeks and breasts, marked with sharp flints and charcoal. Certainly a great proportion of the populace of Junin was of mixed blood—tainted, that is, from whichever side the taint may have come—and that accounts for evident feeble mentality and resultant disordered lives.

As many as six murders have taken place in Junin during the three days of carnival. Once I saw a Gaucho ride straight into a wine shop, and when expostulated with pull out a revolver and shoot; then ride out and canter away, as the landlord fired shot after shot at his retreating figure. Children playing in the street were also interested spectators of this scene.

My own life in Junin was not devoid of adventure.

The school-house was a corner building, with the rooms running along two sides of a square enclosing a large yard. There I lived alone, a woman next door providing for all my needs.

One evening about nine o'clock I returned to my rooms, and when walking across the yard towards the glass door of my study observed a dim light inside—go out.

On approaching I found the door half open, and as I entered someone within suddenly opened a door leading into the schoolroom and rushed through. Guided by the noise which the intruder made in the darkness, I followed hard after him, and also bumped as he did into every available piece of furniture. Soon he had opened a door leading into the yard and we raced across, first to the street door, which, however, was bolted at the top, and then to the wall. It would have been easy to scale this, but I was too close behind for more than a start to be made, and abandoned.

By this time I had an idea that the thief must be a youth who lived quite near, and who worked in the railway loco-

motive works; but the night was pitch dark and it was impossible to recognise anyone. With his back to the wall the rascal faced me saying:

"If you touch me, I'll put a knife into you!"

However, I made a grab, and his hands being not yet lowered from the climbing, I managed to get hold of both his wrists. When it was evident that I wanted him out in the street he no longer resisted, and when we reached the door he unfastened the top bolt and I captured that wrist exactly as before. Out we went, neither of us troubling to close the door behind us!

The street, or road, was deserted, but I saw that my suspicions had been correct, and determined to take Pablo home. But Pablo would not go home; he struggled fiercely, and our progress was very slow.

At last he tripped me up and we fell, locked together, Pablo uppermost, but neither of us was able to recover from that absurd position, for the threat of the knife made me hold tightly to my companion.

In a few minutes a man came along, and, bending over us in the darkness, asked what the trouble was.

"This is a thief. Hold him while I get up," I replied. But instead he blew a police whistle and hurried off as fast as possible.

As if by magic a mounted policeman galloped almost over us. We got up then, but the police sergeant cut short my explanations. Behold us, walking side by side, dusty, hatless, savage; with a half-Indian police officer coming behind clanking his cavalry sword and jingling his spurs.

I objected to enter the police station, and desired to be taken on a few yards to the house of the English doctor, a friend of mine, who finally went and made all right for me.

My desk had been broken open and money and some

jewellery taken. Pablo was kept a day or two in the lock-up as a warning, but he was never sent for trial. Poor fellow! He had some faint trace of English blood in him, but he had never received that religious and moral training that should have gone with it. His younger brothers had a better chance.

Once again I got into contact with the police over a much more serious business.

When the Bishop paid visits to us, he was always the guest of the chief engineer of the railway works. On one occasion after an evening service in the school-house he left with his host, intending to return for a celebration of Holy Communion early next morning. Some time afterwards I remembered a matter of which it was necessary to acquaint him that night, and decided to try to catch him before he retired to bed.

Now, in front of my house was an expanse of open ground about two hundred yards wide, which was reserved for a "plaza," or public square, although at that time the houses only approached it at two points. Paved roads intersected it and footpaths had been worn in many directions. It was entirely uncared for, but there were many weeping willows and poplars and "algarrobo" trees in it.

After dark most people walked round this desolate place, declining its short cuts; but I always crossed through the middle, occasionally meeting some other pedestrian who would certainly give me a wide berth, with which I also would favour him. This time I crossed it at a sharp trot and actually hoped that no policeman would notice and detain me for an explanation of such unusual haste. Nearing one of the cross-roads lined by ancient willow-trees, my toe caught in a root and I fell headlong.

By the time an upright position was recovered, two police-

men loomed up in the darkness, demanding to know what had happened. It was soon told—my haste—the root—the fall. However, one man guarded me while the other looked around to see whether it was not someone else who had fallen.

Returning from his fruitless search, the officer posted himself in front of me and began an attempt to satisfy himself as to the real cause of my running, while the other man—a short fellow (and that was the only difference observable in the darkness)—stood behind me.

The policeman searched me for arms, but finding none contented himself with my pocket-book, which I immediately missed, and urgently demanded.

Suddenly the man shoved it back into my pocket—remember that we could hardly see each other. I felt in the book and missed a roll of notes, which fact I asserted with energy and charged the police agent with being a common thief. We wrangled for some minutes, and every second I expected to be knocked senseless by the man behind me, whom I completely ignored—he was doing me no harm, but no help could be expected from him.

By and by I lit a cigarette in order to get a furtive glance at my antagonist's face, and quickly noticed a little black moustache and a pock-marked skin. Had he suspected the object of the light, that moment might well have been my last.

As I continued demanding my money, the little fellow became eager to know how much had been taken, but I declined to give him any idea, leaving him to fight his companion or to watch him carefully, or both, in order to be sure of his share of the booty. Then I was told, if I persisted in the charge of theft, to go with them to the police station, which I, at least, should never have reached.

I refused to budge.

"Well! Where *will* you go?" asked the tall man, puzzled and exasperated.

"I will go where I *was* going," I replied—and that was in quite the opposite direction.

"Go, then," he said, and as I moved away both men jumped to saddle with a clatter of swords and spurs, and then apparently sat still, watching and listening to my retreat.

I found the Bishop sitting up talking with his host, and after doing my errand, I described what had just happened.

The engineer, an old resident in Junin, congratulated me on having got away, but said that the money was gone for ever, pooh-poohing my determination to go to the police station.

However, to the police station I went—avoiding the open space of ground this time.

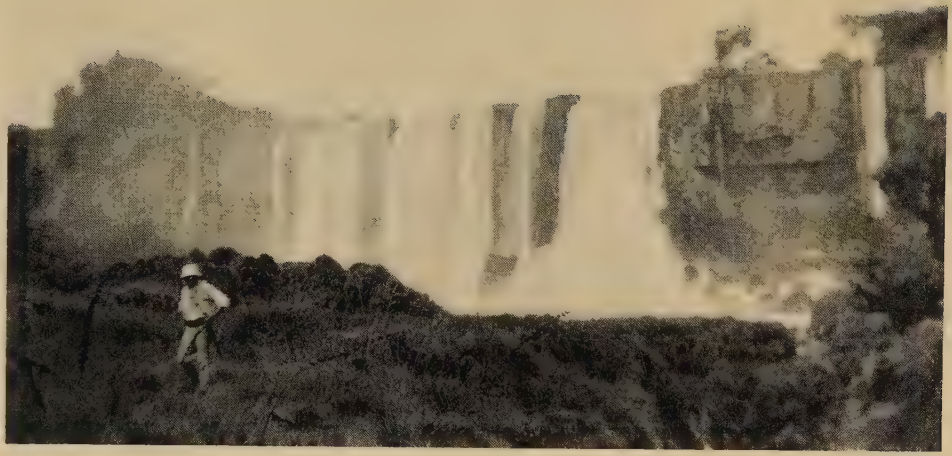
The very young police commissary was much interested in my story, and recognised my limited description of the two men. He walked up and down the barely furnished office for some time in silence, and then called a grizzled old sergeant and asked what men were on duty at such-and-such a place, and whether they had arms. He was told that they only had sabres.

"Well, fetch those men," said the young officer. "They have to help in an ugly job and must come here for their revolvers."

There followed a salute—an exit—the sound of a galloping horse dying away in the distance.

"Tic-tic-tic-tic-tic." The clock was the only sound for a long time.

At last came the noise of horses in the street, halting at the door, and presently three blue-uniformed camp policemen entered, two of them looking surprised to see me there. They stood just within the door. The commissary sat at his desk



DETAIL OF IGUAZÚ FALLS.

facing p. 16.

at the other side of the room. I was posted on a chair well away from all.

"Are these the men?"

"Yes."

"Well, now tell me what happened."

It was amazing to have to repeat the whole story again, but obedience was the only course to adopt.

By and by the tall "prisoner" interrupted, saying that first I had thrown a brick at him.

At this I indignantly jumped to my feet, whereat the commissary pulled open a little drawer at his side and left it open —and I sat down, feeling rather foolish.

Presently the little man was ordered out of the room.

My story being ended at last, the sergeant proceeded to search the culprit, and by and by took him out of the room. The commissary followed and almost immediately triumphantly returned with my money in his hand.

The little man was not punished, but the tall fellow did a spell in the cells, and on liberation was—to my relief—sent to another district to keep law and order!

The Argentine police, especially in the provinces in those days, were very useful at election times. It is true that their presence in force at the polling places—usually the porch of the parish church—would damp the political ardour of many people, but they compensated for that by themselves voting several times over, and each time in a different name, until the proper candidate had got the required number of votes. Sometimes even then the opposition party would rally, capture the position, and destroy all evidence of the election.

Life, however, was not always lurid in Junin, and church and school work was varied by quieter distractions, which will ever remain an asset of memory.

Laguna Gomez was a favourite place for picnics, and its distance enabled one to get an impression of the limitless pampa with its horizon ever unbroken and ever receding. Monotonous, indeed, it spread, yet that round expanse, over which the sun suddenly rose in glory, and fell sadly, while the evening breeze swept by with gentle sighs like the ghostly echoes of the surf of a ghostly sea; across which vast moving disc of earth at even the lone Gaucho cantered heavily, drenched with dew, while one by one the brilliant stars of the southern sky took up their posts as mysterious watchers of the pampa night—that monotonous grey-green plain has its own beauty, like the beauty of the wide ocean, and the sight of it after a long absence is like a drink of refreshing wine.

The lagoon lay shimmering in the grass, a few rushes growing along its low banks, wild fowl of various kinds covering its surface; overhead a delicate pink cloud of flamingoes might sail, causing a beautiful reflection in the water.

My work was entirely amongst English people, and the pleasantest and most fruitful part was, perhaps, with the young people.

Children are nearly always delightful, and to a priest, who should be ever working for the future, they make a special appeal.

Amongst my friends in Junin were two little girls, daughters of an English carpenter, and born of a French mother. They were devout and well behaved, also their dress showed even more taste than poverty. One day they came to service without hats, at which I was somewhat surprised. Another older girl was with them, also hatless.

Presently, however, I learnt that the little ladies had left their bonnie hats at home because their new-found friend pos-

sessed no hat and declined to be the only bareheaded female in church.

Another friend was a boy about eight years old, a devout scholar. One afternoon he found in the street the end of a telegraph wire, cut probably by a bullet, and on grasping it got the surprise of his life. He, however, was able to let go, and then, taking off his cap, he clasped his hands and said:

"Thank you, God, for not killing me!"

Apprised of this incident, his grandfather incredulously went and took up the wire and also got a shock, but his remarks were in German.

In 1905 my Bishop transferred me to Paraguay, where church work had been commenced amongst the English residents a few months before. My work was to be primarily amongst the English people stranded in the interior of Paraguay as the result of the dismal failure of William Lane's experiment in Socialism at New Australia. The colony was founded in 1893 under very promising conditions indeed, but the ruin thereof was speedy, sudden, and complete. The Bishop went up with me, and proved a very happy travelling companion.

Guayrá is the ancient name for the beautiful tract of land peopled by the Guarany nation, and it includes not only Paraguay, but Corrientes and Misiones in Argentina, and the Brazilian Province of Paraná.

The Paraná River is a truly wonderful waterway, and can disappoint no one. Towards the mouth it bears the vulgar name of River Plate, because there the Spanish discoverers saw Indians wearing silver ornaments and their minds were full of thoughts of pelf. I wish the name that registers their disappointment were obliterated in favour of the Indian name "Paraná Guazú."

It is a muddy, smiling, ample, generous river rushing to meet the traveller one hundred miles out at sea, but it hesitates to mingle with the ocean, and the undulating line marking the junction of the waters is singularly distinct.

At Monte Video the river is ninety miles wide, but one hundred miles up at Buenos Aires it only measures a third of that distance. The banks everywhere are low, and the flat pampa commences at the river's brink, so that one's power of admiration is concentrated on the glorious sunshine and on the sweeping flood of that fresh water sea.*

Naturally, the width affects the depth of the water, and the Argentine side is shallow and sandy. From Buenos Aires I have on more than one occasion seen the water blown clean to the horizon by a long continued "pampero," or wind, from the pampa, and bold coachmen, unmindful of the fate of Pharaoh, driving heavily far out "at sea." From a steamer in the mid-stream neither bank is visible until the wide delta is reached about twenty miles above Buenos Aires. From there low tree-covered islands stretch from shore to shore with an intricate maze of fine waterways, divided still by various majestic branches of the Paraná. After the traveller has spent several days and nights ascending this river, passing town after town, with great stretches of wild country between, he begins to be impressed with the mighty flow. Muddy water it is, streaming between banks miles apart, the wind arousing merry wavelets over its bosom and waterbirds swimming or diving about it. Huge trees, or islands of aquatic plants, float down, often carrying small reptiles and animals far from their usual habitat. Indeed, for a reason only to be surmised, these "camalotes," as they are called, once came down in such quantity that the Buenos

* The volume of water surpasses that of all the rivers of Europe put together.

Aires docks were thickly covered with them, to the great inconvenience of the shipping and to the delight of small boy naturalists.

Almost all the riverside towns are on the left or eastern bank. The "city" of Corrientes stands there where the Paraná bends round towards Brazil, and from the high quay the visitor looks out over a river which everywhere stretches wide to the horizon. On resuming the journey, the traveller never can tell when the steamer leaves the Paraná and enters the Paraguay, but the clear colour of the latter assures him of the fact when accomplished.

The whole way up the river winds continually, and constantly shifting sandbanks make expert pilots necessary. These men are mostly Paraguayans, and, I think, it is Indian instinct that carries them safely up and down.

Only once have I been aground, and that was at a time of exceptionally low water—but we were aground two days!

Going due north all the time, the temperature steadily rises, and a more tropical type of vegetation unfolds itself. Wild animals, of course, are not to be seen, but I have counted as many as thirty alligators in view at once, lying like stranded logs on the bright yellow sandbanks, gorged with fish probably. I may remark that one of the big fish of these tropical waters should satisfy an alligator or any animal for some time. The *subirim* is six feet long, and the *pacú,* provided at meals on board, has very solid flesh, and bones almost like sheep's ribs.

Once I saw a canoe full of Indians hastily disappearing up a small tributary, but usually very little life disturbs the stillness.

Late one afternoon, with others on board, I was astounded at the sudden appearance of a brightly blazing mass in the western sky, about forty-five degrees above the horizon. It

fell about twenty degrees, leaving a broad glowing streak like a stick of light, and then abruptly ended; but the shining rod endured and remained in the sky all through our dinner hour, and only after ninety minutes or more were the glowing particles wafted to right and left in a bright cloud and dispersed. Nearly twenty years afterwards I was in the Chaco when a large meteorite was dug up and placed in the museum of Santa Fé. Perhaps it was my old friend.

I was once describing this meteorite's molten surface to an Englishwoman, who was perfectly astounded to hear of such things falling from the sky, and was particularly impressed with the evidence of extreme heat. Her eyes expressed both alarm and astonishment as she exclaimed: "My God! I didn't think it was as hot as that in heaven!"

The Paraguayan villages are almost buried in the forest growth. The architecture is singular and primitive; gone are the flat roofs characteristic of the houses of rich and poor in Argentina, for Paraguay prefers high-peaked roofs of thatch or red tiles, projecting in every direction to protect the mud walls. These simple, one-storied, whitewashed habitations rest pleasantly in their setting of bush and wild wood. Except for such small centres of human life, the banks of the river are hidden by trees, and often the trees are completely covered and shrouded by creepers, as if huge green mantles had been draped over their bowed heads.

Humaitá stands out from all other riverside towns in appearance and in historical interest. Above the glittering waters rushing past, the steep but low bank rises to a surface level, green, and clean as a lawn, stretching back some three hundred yards to houses which form two sides of a square, the fourth side being completed by a little church, and the towering ruins of the great Jesuit church which was battered down in the war. Arch on arch, the old red stones

rise above all other objects; creepers strive to hide the ruins and at the very top a small shrub flourishes jauntily.

For this state of things Solano Lopez, who succeeded his father as President and virtual Dictator in 1862, was responsible. He was partly of Indian blood, and a visit to France seems to have gone to his head like wine. On assuming power he attempted to act as the determining factor in South American politics, although, and not without some reason, he professed to be defending ultimately his own country's independence and welfare.

Resenting the interference of the Empire of Brazil in the affairs of Uruguay, he declared war on his powerful neighbour in 1865, and requested permission from the Argentine Government to march his army through the province of Corrientes. This being denied him, Lopez immediately declared war upon Argentina also, and took Corrientes. There followed an alliance of Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay against Paraguay, and the dreadful struggle started on its bloody course and continued until in 1870 Lopez was slain.

The spirit with which the Paraguayans kept up their efforts for such a length of time with their meagre resources astounds all students of this by-path of history.

Humaitá was the great bulwark of Paraguay, and the history of the war is chiefly the history of its siege. Here it was that Brazilian and Argentine soldiers were mown down in thousands by enemies who were ultimately obliged to steal away in the night; and on those very waters rode the war vessels upon which, in the darkness, the half-clad, half-armed Guaraníes dropped stealthily in canoes, and surprised and seized—and abandoned them. In that unequal struggle four-fifths of all the men of Paraguay were slain, and the crumbling ruins of Humaitá are a fit emblem of the nation then so sorely maimed, and bled, and thrown.

CHAPTER II

PARAGUAYAN VIGNETTES

A GREAT variety of trees mingle together upon the eastern bank of the Paraguay, but on the Chaco side palm forests appear and give a melancholy tone to the prospect, due to the uniformity of the trees, the dull unattractive green of their foliage, and the huge, ugly masses of dead leaves hanging around every stem. When travelling Indians need a fire at night to scare off wild beasts and evil spirits, they simply set fire to one of these dry clusters.

Nearing Asuncion the east bank becomes higher and cliffs show the deep red colour that extends over Paraguay and Eastern Brazil. Lambaré is the prettily sounding name of a prominent landmark near Asuncion—a lone conical peak, covered with trees and rising out of the sea of trees, and it is the name of the Indian chief who dominated the district at the advent of the Spaniards.

Near Asuncion the Pilcomayo enters the Paraguay, accompanied by the Confuso a few miles to the northwards, and which stream must be navigated in order ultimately to arrive at the upper reaches of the Pilcomayo, near the Bolivian frontier, no one knows, except, perhaps, the one who last descended.

However, at the confluence of the Pilcomayo and the Paraguay is the last out-station of the Argentine coastguard service, with its flag of blue and white and the central sun of May. Opposite waves the tricolour with a lion sitting up and taking notice. A few miles to the north, where the waters widen out into a lagoon, Asuncion basks lazily in the

heat, stretching inland over rounded bluffs, where, with little artificiality, it spreads abroad the glowing colours and rich odours of tropical flowers and fruits.

Spanish is the official language of the State, but Guarany is the real tongue of Paraguay, and so softly do the people always talk, that one imagines that only so can the Indian tongue be spoken. Quietly also, barefooted, do the people walk about. Donkeys from surrounding villages throng the town, each bearing a little Guarany woman whose bare heel incessantly drums away at his ribs.

The market square in the morning is the most striking spectacle of the city. Visitors arrive there without having heard any warning noise and are immediately confounded at the quietness of so many people—all females, too!

The square is filled by thousands of peasant women, standing or sitting on the ground, all apparently dressed in white sheets, all intent on buying or selling, and from whom there only arises a murmur like that of a swarm of bees. Almost all the market stuff is contained in baskets on the ground, but the butcher-women perforce have stalls, and each is protected by a substantial iron cage. A singular sight is offered on a Sunday afternoon when the dusky saleswomen, togged up in their best, visit their cages to inspect the meat, and perhaps chop it a little, and rearrange it ready for the morning.

Asuncion possesses the first railway built in South America. It was the work of the Dictator, Lopez, and the terminal station is surprisingly large. Above it is the railway manager's house, which, after the manner of South America, has a " mirador " rising above all—that is, a lookout tower formed of a single extra room, with the usual flat roof, and an iron ladder fastened to the wall outside.

I remember the manager and his assistant, both very tall

men, going up there during a revolution, about the year 1909, to see what they could of it, and quickly succeeding in attracting rifle fire that obliged them to lie down in the gutter behind the low parapet. In that ignominious and awkward position they remained more than an hour, neglecting their duties, for on exposing themselves the bullets showered around immediately. At last a hat having been raised on a piece of stick without attracting attention, the prisoners made a dash for the ladder, which they hated to descend, being on the side from which the firing came.

The Bishop held a service in the drawing-room of the railway manager's house, and in place of a sermon, thought well to describe the Chaco Indian Mission, and to contrast the former wild life of the natives with their present existence, when they may be seen going to church "the men in their blankets and the women in their skins." The expression "deer skin kilts" might have been better understood, but the Bishop certainly stirred up some interest in the work and his address was long remembered.

In the congregation was the venerable Dr. Stewart who resided so long a time in Asuncion. He served in the Crimean War, and afterwards was commissioned to dispose of the Italian troops who, after fighting under the red ensign, caused much trouble when quartered near Portsmouth by their quarrels and stabbings. No country would have them—least of all their own—and they were exported and let loose without permission on the banks of the Paraná.

Dr. Stewart then settled in Paraguay, which country he had visited when trying to dispose of his cargo. He married a Paraguayan lady, with whom he endured many trials during the war, without either of them being shot by the Dictator, and then for many years he was the able and kindly British Consul. It was he who readily gave the site for the

Anglican church in Asuncion as soon as I mentioned the possibility to him; and as he came from beyond Tweed, the church was dedicated to S. Andrew the Apostle.

After my first sermon in Asuncion, the old gentleman made me repeat the gist of it at afternoon tea—he being rather deaf—which had the effect of making me speak up on the next occasion!

Villa Rica, about six hours by rail from the capital, is the second town in the Republic, and a very pretty little place, with red earth, green trees, white-washed houses, red tiles, blue hills, and with masses of hibiscus, roses, bougainvillæas, and other gay plants overflowing from ancient gardens. The range of pretty hills in the distance is said to be the home of many Indians.

Dr. Bottrell lived here many years and was a great blessing to all the countryside. His house still stands prettily by the parish church, and the natives have fastened an enamelled plate on it with the legend: "Bottrell cué"—that is, in Guarany, "where Bottrell was"—and it shows at least that they are not willingly going to forget him.

There was an English, or rather American, chemist in Villa Rica who had married a Paraguayan wife. In his shop I found him purchasing an ostrich's stomach from a poor native in order to grind it up as a remedy for indigestion—and a very effective one it is believed to be.

One afternoon I met that white-haired dispenser of poisons looking very pleased with all the world, for from his array of sons and daughters, he had that day been presented with three grandchildren.

There was a ride of about forty miles from Villa Rica to New Australia where my headquarters were to be, and the pretty ride was through scenery typical of Paraguay, undulating, well-watered country with alternating forest and

prairie land; the whole of it wild and beautifully wild, without being savage. We had to cross the Tebicuari River at its one ford, where the water varies in depth between three feet and sixteen according to the rains. Deep water necessitates a canoe for the traveller, who must hold on to the head-stall of his charger swimming alongside. In drier weather care must be taken that the horse does not roll with his rider in the cool depths of the stream.

A certain English colonist reached that ford one day and found the river deep but yet passable. Following the usual routine, he stripped and fastened his clothes as high up on the pommel of his saddle as possible; then urged the animal into the water and they both swam, he on the leeside of the horse, holding to the mane and splashing his steed's face to keep him from going down stream. If there is no necessity to direct the horse, it is quite a good plan simply to hold on to the tail and be pulled across.

All went well. On the further bank the animal gave himself a shake or two and began to graze, while the man rested to regain his breath and to dry.

By and by the traveller walked towards his tame old horse to secure his clothes, but the horse had other ideas—he just edged away, and grazed and edged away again, always in the direction of home. It was useless trying to catch him—he whisked his tail and trotted off—then stopped for another mouthful of grass. All the curses of the back blocks of Australia flew over that camp ineffectually, and as the horse's hunger became appeased his bolts homewards were more decided.

The disconsolate horseman trudged on, protected from the scorching sun only by his old straw hat. He had fifteen miles to go.

Luckily the track wound along the outskirts of a forest

where was a little shade, and after an hour or so of this he found a native hut and was provided with a shirt. Still the horse was on ahead, and the empty countryside providing no assistance, it got home first. So I was told.

Another feature of that journey is the Tuju-bucú (Guarany for "big mud"), a bog three miles wide where the track crosses it, and although just there the bottom is good, progress is extremely slow and uncomfortable, and the traveller may at any moment sink in mud and water to the saddle.

The passage of two-wheeled timber carts, with their long bullock teams, makes the position and depth of "bad holes" very uncertain. If there is one thing that gives me the shivers it is to feel, in such a place, that my horse is afraid.

A horseman has been lost in the Tuju-bucú. It is naturally the home of all kinds of reptiles, and of the great, ugly, hairy tarantula spider that provides a name for a lively piece of music, even if he fails to provide a lively time for you.

I knew a gallant gentleman who had unfortunately suffered from "d.t.," and who was riding through country flooded to a depth of two or three feet, with the spikes of grass a little above water still, and a tarantula taking refuge on each spike. Knowing that some animal was passing, these horrid things, with one consent, began skimming along the surface of the water towards it, seeking transit to some place of safety.

New Australia Colony was at length reached. I am not bidding for sympathy when I say that my house was built of wattle and mud, the roof being of split shingles, the windows being mere unglazed wooden shutters, and that there was no lock or serviceable bolt to any door. He is a happy man who lives in such conditions, unless he has children to educate or a wife to dress. The utter loneliness of the life was its most trying element, and most men would have felt that much more than I did. For me the solitude was relieved by the

presence of a near neighbour, an old gentleman, our postmaster, who lived in a one-roomed hut surrounded by orange-trees and bananas and pineapples, which, indeed, thrust themselves over my fence. One corner of his hut was the post office, another was the bedroom, the third was the kitchen, and in the fourth we played chess with enthusiasm. My friend's name frequently appeared in the chess column of *The Times*. He was an old white-haired man, very well read and musical—indeed, he showed me several medals gained by his musical compositions in Australia.

He played for me on Sundays on our tiny, portable organ, and well remembered are his efforts to keep a hornet from his feet, which he could not just then remove from the pedals, and which were bare except for alpargata slippers.

Those feet provided another untoward incident. Each month about full moon we had an evening service. Our congregation assembled from afar on horseback, and spurs and riding whips and revolvers were part of our use. Illumination was provided by a few oil lamps, which served also to attract huge beetles and fat moths to their doom—and the sudden destruction of the lamp-tubes.

One evening as I entered and knelt, there was an unseemly air of levity over the people which aroused my indignation, and caused me at once to speak and to upbraid them with greater heat than would have been possible could I have seen my organist desperately trying to free his lower extremities from travelling ants.

We had important educational work in Paraguay, chiefly on the two socialist colonies of New Australia and Cosme. Naturally, religion was taught, and although attendance at the lessons was optional, the influence on the children and on many parents was marked.

After two or three years occurred the great event of our

first Confirmation. The Bishop arrived and with him a downpour of torrential rain, so that on the morrow hardly anybody got to service on account of the flooded creeks.

After Matins the Confirmation was declared postponed until the next episcopal visit, and the Bishop and I went off to lunch.

As the rain suddenly ceased, the creeks as rapidly fell and were forded at the first possible moment by eager members of our congregation; so that soon after midday the extraordinary sight of a little mob of boys and girls riding up and clamouring to be confirmed that very afternoon astonished the good Bishop, who, happily, after a moment's wavering, acceded to their demand.

When I first went up to Paraguay there returned from New Australia a young man who, under the Bishop's direction six months before, had started a school for the English children on the colony. He had, in fact, established two schools—at least, he built two school-houses six miles apart, and held class in them on alternate days, many of the children attending also at both places.

It was a merry cavalcade that went each day galloping through the forest. The second school-house was only erected a few weeks before my arrival, and there had been great antagonism shown towards it by certain sturdy agnostics who lived in the vicinity, for, of course, the school was an adjunct of the church, and in any case education normally vitiates the minds of the young, inculcating obedience to parents and governors, and biasing pupils towards respect for law and private property.

The first piece of news given to me was that this second school (then unoccupied) had been burnt down the night before my arrival. The material value of the building was small indeed, yet the incident did not help to make pleasanter

a somewhat cheerless reception. Suspicion fell on whom it did, but the author of the outrage was never discovered. The act, however, saved much trouble, for never afterwards were the classes held in more than one centre.

A second case of arson was more agreeable and charitable in its purpose, although in very few circumstances can it be right and proper to burn down another man's house. The necessity, however, arose in this way.

One colonist, an entirely ignorant fellow, and a most strenuous agnostic and communist, had the great misfortune to lose a little child. There was, of course, no medical man on or near the colony, neither was there any minister of religion of any kind—even if one had been desired.

When the child died, that thorough-going reformer, wishing to manifest his freedom from Christian superstition as well as his contempt for the conventions of civilisation, immediately dug a hole just outside the entrance to his house, and there buried the little body—*sans* coffin and *sans* ceremony. Everyone passing in or out had to walk over the burial-place, which mattered little to most people, but deeply grieved the frail little mother whose heart day by day sank down within her, and whose health in consequence began plainly and rapidly to decline.

At last the neighbours, considering all this, determined to do something to relieve the distressing situation. They persuaded the foolish and obstinate man to take his wife and family away to Villa Rica for a ten days' or so change, promising faithfully to look after his interests during his absence. So away went the sad little group packed in a bullock-waggon.

Two or three days afterwards a few cronies might have been seen sitting by the fire, drinking " maté," smoking green cigars, and chatting with the appointed guardian of the estab-

THE AUTHOR'S DUG-OUT.

facing p. 32.

lishment. Brown, brawny, be-whiskered, with carefree gestures and language, they conversed on men and things until, having sufficiently refreshed themselves, they started with great zest and laughter to build up the fire.

"Do a bit o' cooking," said one, piling log after log on the hearth; and the flames roared up the wide chimney as the wood was stirred and piled higher and higher.

"By God! the chimney's on fire," laughed one of the criminals.

"So! So!" replied another, flinging another log into the flame. "We had better be saving the family plate."

There was a short period of activity, while the simple furniture and other household things were removed to a place of safety—any sign of the dying out of the fire being enthusiastically rectified.

Flames spread fast along the dry shingle roof from room to room, and in a very short time the place was entirely gutted.

"That's cooked his goose," exclaimed one self-satisfied ruffian.

"It has. And now we've got to build another one. Damn it!" grunted an accomplice.

Notice of the unfortunate disaster was sent to Villa Rica with many expressions of sympathy, and with the intimation that friends would build a new house at once.

The neighbourhood became a scene of bustle and good-humoured confusion. Beams of wood were cut and squared, saplings and lianas collected, thatching grass prepared, and gradually a new house arose at a little distance from the site of the old one, every vestige of which was obliterated.

In due time the family returned—the husband wiser and the mother happier. A little moundless grave was still there in the camp, animals wild and domestic trampled it, the sun

and the wind and rain beat down upon it, but no man in derision placed his foot there again.

Social life on New Australia was rather confined to dances given by colonists in such room as they had available—in the house or in the "galpon" shed cleared out for the occasion. Very seldom was any native admitted to these intimate entertainments, which were delightfully friendly and refreshing, although weird and primitive. The mud floor has, perhaps, been prepared for the occasion; friends have provided a few extra lamps; hard benches and a few hard wooden chairs are placed "out of the way" for whoever might appreciate them on such a night; the music is certainly that of a guitar and an accordion with, perhaps, also a fiddle or mandoline—and very seriously do the musicians take themselves. The everyday dress of the guests has been brushed up a little, but lethal weapons still ornament leather belts, and spurs are only removed from top-boots if manifestly in the way.

Paraguayan cigars are smoked in great numbers, small cigars each made of rolled leaf without any packing. An abundant supply of refreshing maté is supplied and also a judicious amount of caña or native rum, which is always taken in small quantities, neat. The girls, bless them! are always charming, and never more so than in such an unconventional setting.

A grand dance was given at the school each Christmastime, attended by everyone on the colony down to the youngest infant. Bullocks, carts, and horses filled the paddock, babies were stowed away in a heap, and the hardy pioneers prepared to enjoy the great social event of the year.

Occasionally a wailing cry would cause a mother to hurry away—and I have known young imps mischievously to change the outer clothing of a brace of babies. Confusion was also caused when men, knowing that the supply of caña would

be small, brought their own bottles and hid them amongst the bushes. Possibilities were many—after a while a man might no longer be able to find the way to his bottle—he might by luck discover someone else's bottle—or evil people might have tracked him and taken his supply! It was the wicked old men who did these things, the young people danced incessantly until the feet of the girls ached sorely, not usually being confined in boots or shoes.

On one occasion, seeing that the fun was slackening and that the belle of the ball was sitting behind a row of women and resisting all invitations from crestfallen swains, I began to reproach her.

"It's all right, Mr. Newbould," responded her mother, laughing, "she has taken off her boots to ease her feet!"

Generally, everything went off quietly and happily, but once a little flutter was aroused by a worthy socialistic and agnostic friend of mine beginning a speech about "Mr. N.'s tin-pot God."

The moment chosen for this attempt was when I was out of the room, and the orator was suddenly and effectively silenced by the other men present (some of them as agnostic as himself), so that I only learnt about the incident afterwards.

My work in Paraguay lasted six years, and I hope that it was appreciated by the English residents of the country, but the one comment on it now to be recorded was made when I had only spent half a year on New Australia.

I had ridden about five miles one Sunday afternoon to have service at a private house. What a joy that particular ride always was! How interesting would these pages be if only they contained a half-adequate description of the winding forest track along which I rode—the towering old trees with their branches matted with lianas and their tops covered with

blossoms of pink or purple or gold (a blaze of glory, out of sight, indeed, yet discovered by the carpet of fallen petals)—the impenetrable, thorny thickets on either hand—the orchids, the mosses, and the ferns—the rippling brook that crosses the track with hundreds of butterflies drinking at the damp margin, each species in its own little domain—the gay toucans and parrots and the monkeys—a few primitive native huts, and one or two substantial houses with neat surrounding gardens, evidently the homes of English settlers.

At last the break through into the grassy plain was reached and a gallop enjoyed. How the long grass waved! How the dust flew! How we splashed through the creek! Then—there along the outer fence a row of tethered and saddled horses indicated the number of neighbours who had already arrived for service. Benches and chairs arranged on the grass in the shade of a great wild fig-tree near the house, and a litany stool for me, completed the furniture of this place of worship.

It was a tranquil spot. Behind the house the dense mass of the forest rose in a lofty dark green wall; while in front the open camp rolled away, rising and falling gently in all directions towards the horizon, where, indeed, its green expanse was everywhere framed by the darker colour of forest vegetation; and across the whole picture ran a waving line of matted shrubs and bushes which flourished along the banks of a creek, hiding the stream from view beneath flaming tints of budding spring.

Just as the service began the hostess hurriedly arose from her seat and went to the verandah of the house, returning almost immediately.

The service, an abridged form of Evening Prayer, was indeed simple, and yet rendered in as orderly and seemly a manner as in any church. A few favourite hymns, a lesson, the Creed

and responses, an address, a few collects, and then the Blessing —can you not imagine the quiet service?

Then came the tightening of girths and the mounting and the "farewells."

The young folk going in my direction seemed to be enjoying some secret source of merriment. Happy people who can enjoy innocent fun so heartily! They looked at me occasionally and laughed again. What was the cause?

Had I not seen Mrs. J. jump up and run off with the parrot? Had I not heard what the bird said? Well, parrots are foolish birds, and this particular one had loudly ejaculated: "What rot! What rot!"

Paraguay! Paraguay! The mere pronouncing of the word draws the lips into a smile, and certainly the name recalls a land of laughter, a merry people, and sunshine, and the scent of orange blossom. Poverty and wickedness exist but rest lightly on the inhabitants; and memory thrusts such subjects into the background.

The Paraguayans are Roman Catholics. Heaven help them! They have very vague ideas of the outer world and are generally convinced that the Pope never dies. An attempt was made a short time ago to elevate the one and only bishop in Paraguay to the rank of archbishop, so that in ecclesiastical matters Asuncion should not be behind the capitals of the sister republics of the Plate!

The present bishop is a Paraguayan of the Paraguayans, of true native stock, who preaches eloquently in Guarany and will hardly give a church to any priest who cannot do the same. During the Great War, when the imports of the country fell away to nil, it was he who issued a pastoral letter lamenting the decay of religion, the changing of many salutary old customs, and the neglect of certain almost for-

gotten cottage industries. Through his influence long unseen weaving machines were brought to light again, and now hand looms provide much of the cloth used in the country districts.

The Paraguayan padre has a certain amount of physical freedom denied to many of the "cloth." Necessity demanding it he fastens his cassock around his waist, and bestriding his favourite horse, sets off on lengthy journeys. Perhaps this activity broadens his mind, resulting in a liberality of opinion quite as refreshing as unexpected.

One hot summer morning I rode to San José with two English colonists to make the acquaintance of the parish priest. Fifteen miles we went through forest, field, bog, and running stream, and then the old red-roofed town, half hidden by vegetation, appeared clustered on the crown of a low hill, the church standing in the middle like a hen caring for her chicks.

We climbed into the town and quartered ourselves upon an English chemist who, with his little wife, welcomed us kindly and provided all good cheer. Water, however, was scarce (the drought had long continued, and the Paraguayan rarely has a well) and a bath was out of the question. A wash, however, we got. Being ushered into a bedroom and placed before a bowl of water, as thoroughly as possible I washed and, at any rate, succeeded in leaving the water densely charged with mud. Our host hurried me away before the bowl could be emptied, and my companions, one after the other, deepened the dark brown hue of the liquid within!

The young chemist (at least his father had been one) took me round the town for a stroll, and during the excursion a welcome thunderstorm burst, driving us for shelter to the house of an ex-judge known to my guide. The old man had gone quite blind, but his eyes were bright, and with his fresh

complexion and white hair made a not unpleasing sight. My friend, Methodist-like, had introduced me as the "pastor" of New Australia; and after a time the judge turned to me —exactly as if he had been able to see—and said, but with a certain tone of wondering inquiry: "And the señor has charge of the cattle of the colony!"

The weather having cleared we inspected the church, a large adobe building with a verandah all round, and with a scaffolding of palm logs near the west door, enclosing a spiral staircase, and supporting two bells with a protecting roof. The whole of the exterior of the church was profusedly and fantastically decorated with stencil work in various colours, the work of the priest himself.

Soon we entered the adjoining house of the "padre," stepping straight into a small, low room containing a few pieces of simple antique furniture, and with two or three prints of popes and saints upon its whitewashed walls.

When Padre Faraoni entered he proved to be a man of about seventy years of age, tall and spare, and with rather long, white hair, and black, piercing eyes. He had arrived from Italy forty years before and, it was said, had contrived to amass considerable wealth.

He was evidently pleased to see us and asked various questions about the outer world, and insisted on our tasting wine of his own making. His one servant, an old woman like a dried fig, with bare, skinny legs, moved silently over the mud floor bringing a tray with one glass of wine. Gracefully the padre offered the glass to me, and I took it expecting others to appear, but none came, so our little loving cup was passed all round. When it got back to the priest, he said, referring to different sects of Christians: "My friends, we are all going one road, some on horseback, some by bullock cart, and some on foot."

Then he asked after the state of the fences of his "estancia," which bordered the colony, and begged my friends to keep an eye on any of his straying animals.

Glad was I afterwards for having met this liberal-minded lover of sour wine and fat cattle, for, happening another day to be in the neighbourhood with my bishop, we were benighted at San José, and were unable to find a lodging-place until Padre Faraoni came to our rescue.

The padre died a year or two later. May he rest in peace—be it bullock cart or whatever he went by!

PARAGUAYAN INDIANS.

CHAPTER III

AT NEW AUSTRALIA

ANOTHER good friend of mine was Matt, an English colonist, whose good nature was proverbial. As a very young man he had emigrated to Australia and from there had come with the other disgruntled socialists to Paraguay. On the voyage to Australia he fell in love with a young girl who afterwards became his charming wife.

How many people have to bless the ocean for similar good fortune! What influence is there in the heaving sea, or in the vessel ploughing her lonely way, that makes love's tendrils shoot out so graspingly?

Love grew strong in those humble hearts, but not without sundry checks and obstacles. The maiden's toothache, for example, interfered with young love's progress considerably, and indeed it must have been a very trying circumstance. The girl had not enough courage to face the doctor, so Matt, having decided to procure a remedy, presented himself at the doctor's cabin, looking very sad, and, holding his huge hand to his jaw, begged for something to put into his tooth.

The good—(he must have been good!)—doctor saw nothing wrong with the tooth so carefully pointed out to him, nor with any other of that set; however, he went to a cupboard and returned with a small glass full of a vile-smelling liquid.

"Here, drink this," he said.

"Oh," exclaimed Matt, "I'll take it to my cabin and drink it."

"Nonsense! Down with it now."

And Matt, of course, had to take it like a lamb—so to speak!—and went on deck feeling nastily checkmated. "By gum!"

Yes, he was always good-natured, and would really give the shirt off his back to anyone in need—a kind of agnostic St. Martin—and not a very sober one.

Soon after my arrival in Paraguay he came to let me know that in his opinion the Church was the curse of the earth, and always had been—nothing personal intended. He next invited me to stay with him a day or two for a change. I went. How well I remember his little wooden house and all connected with it! His eldest daughter rolled cigars for me, singing softly and tossing her red head the while. Dear girl! A few years later she died—with her first baby—and I, alone in the house with her husband, helped to lower her into a rough coffin, ready for the bullock cart that an hour or two later carried her to her last resting-place!

But then she sang and smiled and made my cigars, while the patient mother occupied herself in teaching her two younger children to read.

Matt showed me a wonderful chair he had made, like a deck-chair, with a place for a glass and a rest for a book; also his little mill for pressing the juice out of the sugar cane; and his ditches to protect the garden from the young hopping locusts that sometimes devastated the whole countryside.

In the house was a wonderful chimney, within which several of us could get at once and, sitting round the fire there, we watched the logs blazing until bedtime. In the night an old he-goat awakened me by sharpening his horns on the weather-board wall just outside my window, and being half asleep I doubled my fist and gave him a vigorous whack on the point of the near horn, which annoyed me more than the goat!

Matt was most charitable. He tried to be a really good socialist, but he had learnt little Spanish and still less Guarany. About the time of my visit some natives went to his house with a subscription list, from which it appeared that somebody or other, through some accident, had broken both arms and suffered other damage, and the collection was being made for his benefit. Matt did all he could, scraping together all the cash in the house and handing it over to the natives, who responded by devoutly praying for blessings on his head —and on his wife and children and on his diminutive flocks and herds!

A day or two later, at the local store, he discovered that the subscription had been organised to replace a battered old image of San Antonio in the nearest church; and he stamped on his hat—but he was always good-natured!

Paddy, the baker, was quite a different character. He was Australian born and, of course, of Irish descent. He had demanded and obtained a plot of land—the usual 120 acres—and was wealthy in bone and muscle, too, but he lacked capital and he lacked brains. Thus it was that on that socialistic colony he was obliged to grow vegetables and bake bread to hawk round for sale. It was a sad relapse from the sturdy self-dependence that was his in theory, and a step towards division of labour and serfdom, but we all welcomed Paddy and his sack of loaves. He used to arrive at my house late in the morning, afoot, unshod, with his sack of bread on his shoulder. My housekeeper, an old ex-soldier of the United States of America, welcomed him to the midday meal and a lengthy discussion of the world and its ways.

Paddy was ever athirst for knowledge, but he could not read or write, for which he used to curse his long dead father with warm and vigorous language.

As Christmas drew near a generous idea became definite

in my mind. I would help my baker to get a horse, which would enable him to go further afield and would lessen the risk of his visits ceasing in the hot weather. The difficulty of suggesting such help to so independent a son of labour was overcome with tact, and a small sum of money was given to Paddy on the understanding that it was to go towards buying a horse; and Paddy received the gift on the understanding that it was a friendly act and not an act of charity!

The matter was kept strictly private.

Paddy bought a mare. He made a saddle for himself, and stirrups of wood, and with a piece of rope for bridle sallied forth on his rounds. His sudden acquisition of wealth surprised people, and his long, bony figure perched aloft caused some smiles.

Paddy had secured only a mare, but still a good animal, and I wondered what the price might have been and how the balance had been so quickly raised. In the Argentine camp mares are never ridden, although I have seen them used to churn up mud for brick-making and also threshing corn, in both cases being driven round and round in circular enclosures. Paraguay, however, is a hard country for the rearing of horses and consequently the poorer natives are glad of any kind of a mount.

There were two horse-dealers on New Australia, one of whom, "Big Charlie," had let Paddy have the mare at a very low price—a veritable bargain.

Occasionally Paddy visited our nearest town of any size—our railway town—Villa Rica—thirty-six miles from the nearest point of the colony—and now he could ride in. It happened that in all innocence he chanced to catch, saddle, and go off with a mare very like his own, but which was not really his; and this is explained by the fact that the horses and cattle of the colonists usually run together on common

unappropriated land, and, further, that Paddy's knowledge of horses was insignificant.

As luck would have it, the man to whom the stolen mare really belonged happened to be in Villa Rica with his mother at the same time as the errant baker, and passing a house on his return recognised his own animal tied to a fence.

"Hullo, Paddy, you've got my mare," he called.

Now, as I have already indicated, the special feature of Paddy's language was its strength, and being then, for some reason, very much provoked, he belched forth like a mud volcano. The dispute waxed hot, but reason was strong on the side of "the other man," whose brand was marked on the mare's skin; and who finally punished the baker for his unrestrained language by driving the mare off before him and leaving Paddy to get home as best he could.

Then, indeed, Paddy exploded, and to the great astonishment of the "other man," his mother, and all within hearing, began cursing the Church and the clergy and everything connected with them. "Them damned parsons" were always causing trouble, and if the parson at New Australia had not given him money to buy the mare, etc.

So the whole story came up to the colony, and made me blush to think that my help had been so foolishly bestowed.

But by-and-by Paddy rode about on a horse. He had got rid of the mare. Here was news! The other horse-dealer—"Old Bill"—had swopped a horse for the mare! What had Paddy given besides? "Nothing," said Paddy, and the bargain had been proposed by the horse-dealer. By-and-by Old Bill and Big Charlie were riding together across the camp when Charlie Guazú (as the natives called him) brought up the subject of the exchange.

"Yes," acknowledged Bill, "I had too many horses and I thought she would do to run with the drove."

"Ah," continued Charlie, "did you ever examine her mouth?"

"No," was the reply, "but I know her age. I remember her being foaled, I do." And Old Bill looked inquiringly at his companion, who chewed away in silence at his unlighted cigar.

On Saturday, when the cattle were rounded up for their weekly inspection, Bill got that mare into the corral also, and was astounded to find that *she had never had any teeth!*

It was my fortune almost to receive two legacies on New Australia. They consisted of pieces of land about fifteen miles apart, each with a house of sorts upon it and cattle, etc., being, in fact, the earthly possessions of two old bachelor settlers of whom I saw very little although our relations were quite cordial.

They were both native born Australians, and had come to our colony with the original settlers. They believed themselves to have long outgrown the Christian religion. One man was of Irish extraction and in childhood had supposed himself to be a Roman Catholic—that was Dan. The other must have had Scotch blood in his veins, judging by his argumentative inclinations, but his educational equipment seemed to consist of well-memorised scraps of an encyclopædia. On occasions he would eject his knowledge at me and want to discuss the weight of the nearest star or of some antediluvian reptile, and so expose my ignorance.

In spite of their militant agnosticism, the aged bachelors came to the conclusion that they could do nothing better with their land at death than leave it to me for the benefit of our church school. I knew nothing of their resolution until long after its unfortunate abandonment.

In compliance with their determination, the honest and

worthy couple appointed a day in which to meet at the office of the Administrator of the Colony (our one legal functionary, a very excellent man, but the openly declared enemy of the Church as an institution) and there register their wills. They met, indeed, but the administrator who, no doubt, was vastly astonished at their intentions, roundly declared them to be under the influence of drink and incapable of then making wills. All I can say is that the charge does not seem to have been denied, for the delinquents meekly arranged to attend together on another date. Unfortunately it had the same result, and the legacies never came to me.

One man married afterwards, very unhappily, and the other died; and this is how he died, or rather the strange way in which I was apprised of his death.

New Australia was a strip of land about twenty miles long, and Dan, with one English neighbour, lived at the extremity nearest the railway—still many leagues away. I lived near the centre of the colony, and from the station of Sapucay had a long ride, in the last part of which I passed Dan's house at a distance of six or eight miles.

Well! I had been absent from the colony some weeks, and rode back as usual alone, and rather late in the day. About eight p.m.—an hour after sunset—being somewhat abreast of Dan's house, I felt a strange and strong inclination to cut across country and pay him a visit. So far as I know there was no road in that direction—and in any case I always had difficulty in finding his lone establishment hidden in the woods—and I knew that he always went to bed "with the hens." Of course the idea of visiting him was completely absurd and unreasonable, and I would not go.

And yet again and again that call seemed to come, and over again I considered the *cons*—there were no *pros*—and, slowly riding along in the darkness, made up my mind *not* to go.

Very uneasy about the matter, I determined to pay him a call the very next day—and did so.

In the morning I sat at breakfast listening to the pouring rain which had begun to fall before my arrival home the previous evening, when suddenly through the noise of the storm came the sound of a galloping horse splashing through mud and water and halting at my door. A young colonist of swarthy countenance, and that burnt to a still deeper brown, dismounted. A conical, broad-brimmed straw hat was doffed as he entered the house; a great "poncho" protected his entire body, and from every part of its deep fringe the water trickled to the floor; beneath were just visible the bottoms of cotton trousers and bare feet armed with huge spurs.

It was Dan's neighbour, and when he hurriedly appeared in the midst of that torrential rain my heart fell. I do not know whether that is the correct expression or not, but my presentiments received an alarming accession of force—the worst had happened to Dan.

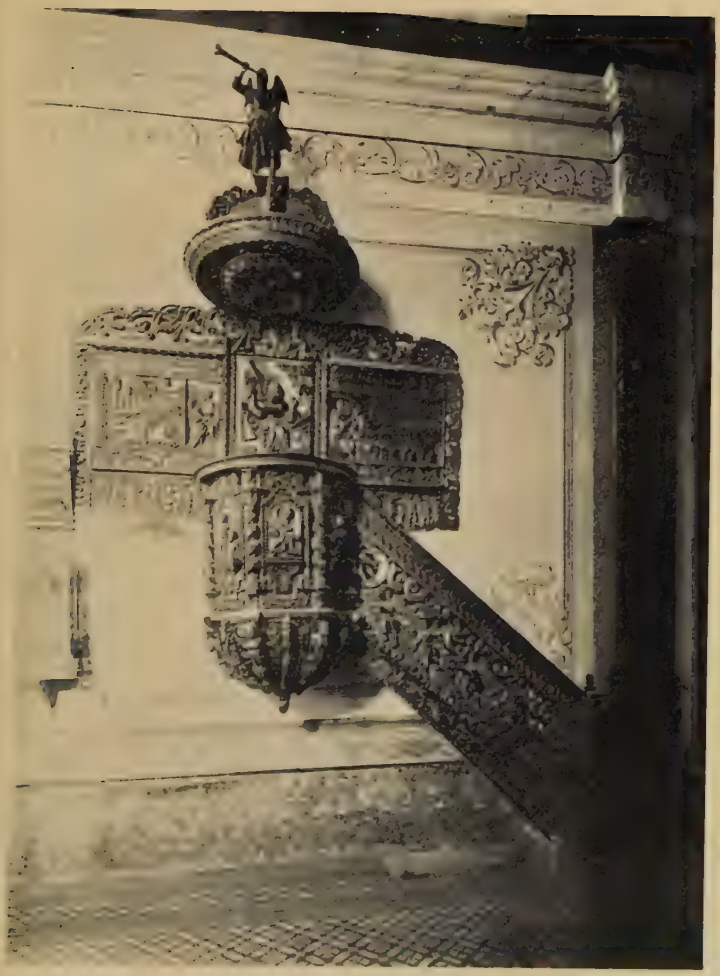
Perhaps in such circumstances a man never proffers inquiry, but dumbly waits with dull expectancy the confirmation of his mysterious knowledge—which yet is not knowledge.

"Good-morning, sir! I just called to see if you had come back. We found Dan dead in bed this morning—half in and half out of bed, he was. I'm going to the administration to report. He was all right yesterday."

So then I went to Loma Ruguá and saw poor Dan—too late!

We had difficulty in carrying out the burial on account of the storm and of the distances. One bullock cart carried the body and another brought a rough coffin, until they met at an appointed place, then one returned and the other pushed on through the mud to our little cemetery.

Before my advent defunct colonists had been buried



PULPIT IN CHURCH IN JUJUY.

facing p. 48.

wherever convenience or sentiment indicated, but I stopped that and had a little lonely burial ground consecrated by our Bishop.

Almost every year Bishop Every used to visit Paraguay, and we would meet at Asuncion and travel together through the country. How easily, in imagination, am I again on the pier watching the steamer approaching over the sunlit waters, scanning the passengers until the calm and cheerful face of the Bishop is discovered! After a couple of days in the capital we would proceed by rail to Sapucay—a four hours' journey indeed, but considerable time was occupied by stoppages at picturesque and primitive little towns with strange Guarany names when we had abundant leisure to contemplate a considerable proportion of the population assembled to witness the daily passage of the train. Women everywhere would be offering articles for sale, perhaps the beautiful lace of Paraguay, aptly named in the native tongue "ñanduti" (that is, "spider's web"); or perhaps their little brown hands would present cigars, eggs, fruit, or "chipas." The chipas is a kind of bread made of mandioca meal and cheese, and often baked in the form of a ring. At the beginning of winter, when the sugar cane is crushed, vendors of the dirty looking fresh juice ("musta" as it is called) would be much in evidence.

At one station women would always board the train with maté cups and hot water to satisfy the desire of passengers for "Paraguayan tea."

Sapucay is a large and busy place compared with those wayside towns, for there are the railway workshops with English engineers, mechanics, and storekeepers. The town gets its name from the "echo" which so distinctly resounds from the steep wooded hills encircling it.

At that place we always had service in the reading-room

of the club. Unforgettable is the night when travelling ants came to Evensong, causing a very restive congregation and a number of hasty exits! Usually, however, there was peace; and what congregations assembled there! Some members would be just out from England with memories of recent services in the homeland; others, who had been many years abroad with scarcely ever an opportunity of joining in the well-remembered services; also there would be present young people born in the country to whom our simple service would appear imposing and impressive. Impressive I think it was to all, since not custom called them together, but just the voice of Mother Church, which they obeyed with varying degrees of appreciation and yet, withal, with sincerity.

On the visit now being described, we left Sapucay on horseback for New Australia instead of going by train to Villa Rica and riding thence, and this we did because a road had recently been made over the hills. The work of opening a road had been given by the railway to some of our colonists, and ultimately the work was accomplished in a peculiar way; for after deciding upon a route, the contractor next bought a bag of salt which he strewed along the track and so attracted all the wandering cattle in the neighbourhood. Bellowing for the salt and horning each other, they soon trampled down a path which, with a little chopping of trees and blasting of rock, was paid for by the railway!

I had never crossed those hills, nor had the Bishop, but an engineer friend from Sapucay was to accompany us to New Australia, who had several times been over them as far as San José, and I knew the road from that town to the colony, so we stared off confidently. A colony boy who knew the country like an Indian was also with us.

The first part of that most interesting ride was very steep, and by-and-by we had to dismount and lead our horses over

the broken, stony road that wound upwards through the thick woods. Once over the crest—which was about a thousand feet above the plain—the hardly perceptible track glided down long undulating slopes, by open glades, and cliffs and gurgling streams, where grew many dwarf palms and other plants not seen at lower levels. At the base we crossed a considerable watercourse, easily fordable at that season, and emerged into the camp passing the quaint hamlet of Valenzuela, and also several wooden crosses erected where people had been killed; at last we hailed the appearance of the picturesque old town of San José, with its red-tiled houses straggling off into the surrounding forest.

We had travelled slowly and it was then nearly sunset, and to my dismay the Bishop declared that he could not possibly go further that day. Bishop Every is as hard as nails—or used to be—but I knew that just then he was unwell. An hour or so after our start, when we halted to breathe our horses after the climb and to tighten the girths, he had rested for a few moments on the ground, and when we halted in a wood for lunch he had immediately stretched himself out and gone fast asleep. For a whole hour we sat looking hungrily at our packages of food waiting for him to awake, and then he declined to share our repast.

His collapse now alarmed me, for the nearest doctor was forty miles away, and there was no hotel or inn at San José. Travellers in that part of the world do as they best can for themselves.

In spite of the really hospitable nature of the Paraguayan, I could find no one willing to put up our rather large party for the night, perhaps because there was sickness, perhaps because we were strange churchmen—were we not heretics?

At last I bethought me of the parish priest whose acquaint-

ance I had made some time before. He was at home, and in the semi-darkness of his simply furnished living-room I explained the position, anxiously watching the tall black-robed old man as he bent towards me his shock of white hair. From his doorway he pointed out a house hard by the church where his own Bishop lodged on his rare visits, telling me there to make my request giving his name. No time was lost, and soon the disused room was swept and cleaned and beds prepared in it for the Bishop and me. Off the room was a small oratory with its altar decorated with artificial flowers —red flowers—the colour of the political party most allied with the clergy. The whole party (minus its head) was generously given a wholesome dinner, "and so to bed," but only two of us had beds, other members lay down as they were on the verandah with saddles for pillows; getting as far as possible from the splashing rain which descended warm and heavy before daybreak.

The Bishop had desired me to say Evensong at his bedside at a certain hour, but I did not wake him for it, and displeased him by obliging him to join in near the end.

We continued our journey after breakfast and reached our destination at midday.

That visit was signalised by the only marriage which I conducted on the colony. It was the first religious marriage amongst the colonists, and so aroused considerable interest.

There was no church, and services were held in the schoolhouse, which had a raised portion at one end corresponding to a chancel.

It was arranged that the civil marriage should immediately precede the Church service, but should take place in another room (the kitchen, in fact) where the administrator would attend for the purpose. During that first legal ceremony the Bishop and I waited elsewhere, and after its conclusion there

was still a long and inexplicable delay before we received the signal that all was ready.

At last we went up to the altar and the bridal party entered—the groom being a very stalwart backwoodsman, and the bride, as the children afterwards said, looking like a queen in her silk dress and flowing veil.

After the service I learnt that the long delay had been caused by the refusal of the bride and bridegroom to be "dressed" for a civil ceremony, to the great disgust of our agnostic registrar. The bridegroom "changed" in the forest!

Then came the wedding breakfast, which was dispensed happily in an avenue of orange-trees whose branches, interlacing overhead, formed a suitable and effective canopy. The wedding cake was a marvel. The whole event was a triumph.

Having mentioned the civil marriage, I may say that never did I belittle its value or show disfavour towards it in any way. My attitude was plainly so much the reverse that I was asked to perform one. It came about thus.

The administrator, being obliged to absent himself from the colony for several weeks, asked the police commissary to act for him. The latter (an Irishman) agreed, but unfortunately, a few days later, fell sick with a bad heart; and, having arranged to perform a marriage between two natives, wrote asking me to be good enough to officiate.

This seemed to me a very informal way of getting over the difficulty, and I declined and suggested that the commissary should make the couple attend at his bedside if he could not get to the office of the administration. But he obstinately declared that the business must be got through in the office, and if I would not act, he would attempt to walk there (four or five miles) even if he were to die on the way. So he went, with a couple of soldiers attending him ready to bring back the corpse if necessary.

He returned none the worse for the adventure, and then explained why he had been so anxious for the service to take place. The bridegroom had taken the girl from her parents, a year or so before, without any service, religious or civil, but he only kept her until her clothes were worn out and then sent her home to remain until her parents fitted her out again. This was done more than once, and to avoid a continuance of this scandalous conduct the relations had prevailed on the hopeful pair to marry. No doubt it was all to the good, but I was rather pleased that I had not officiated.

Our work at New Australia being accomplished the Bishop and I returned to Sapucay, accompanied only by the engineer, who replaced me as guide after passing San José.

On we went—across the river—and on—and on—and on! In the afternoon sun the wooded hills were lovely—but where was the track leading us? My friend expressed his doubts to me and stirred up my interest, and our confidence oozed away as we progressed. Our anxiety was hidden from the Bishop as much as possible, although every now and then we would leave him and climb some eminence whence a better view might be obtained. Fine views, indeed, and little satisfaction did we get, although on returning we assumed an air of assurance for his lordship's benefit.

The light faded and mosquitoes came out in strength. The Bishop knew that we ought to have reached Sapucay by sunset; still there we were groping our way, splashing through brooks, and sometimes having to dismount in order to get our horses under tree trunks which had long ago fallen across the faint track we were following.

I had taken the lead.

We ate what little food we had and plodded on, sadly brooding over disagreeable probabilities. Suddenly the track

branched off into two, and I halted for a moment surveying the diverging ways. Then up came the Bishop.

"Oh, here are two paths," he exclaimed, "which do we take?"

And that engineer replied: "Whichever you like, my lord."

I never have heard Bishop Every swear, but at that moment by a sixth sense I knew it!

"You've lost the way, then?" at last he gasped.

"Yes," I replied, "we have lost the road, but I believe we are going in the right direction."

The mosquitoes kept us moving. On and on we went in the glorious moonlight of the tropics and, as a matter of fact, we arrived at Sapucay about nine o'clock at night, very thankful indeed for supper and bed.

CHAPTER IV

AUTHORITY

My agnostic friends usually are inclined to make much of the antagonism, suspicion, and jealousy manifested between different sects of Christians and between individuals of opposing sects. No doubt they have some justification for their critical remarks, but there is another side to the subject which my wanderings from time to time discovered.

These pages reveal glimpses of the attitude of various people, nominally Roman Catholic, towards an Anglican priest, which was never uncharitable and often very singular.

It is not easy to imagine the mental state of a people who had been practically isolated from Europe for centuries until steam power bridged the ocean, and who also, for the last hundred years, had been ostracised and hampered by the countries that barred their way to the outer world. And of course only few Paraguayans are descended from European stock. Lopez, the dictator, was the grandson of a Guaycurú Indian woman, and the Guaycurús are even to-day the wildest of the wild tribes east of the Paraguay River and the most primitive.

I was riding, alone as usual, along a wide camp road (it was no road at all—only that in a certain place, crossing the rough, uncared-for prairie, were tracks of carts and horsemen over a width of about a hundred yards) when a solitary horseman approached and saluted and passed; but passing he gazed intently at me and presently reined in his steed. When I did the same he came towards me and, after ordinary greeting, inquired whether I was not bound for Villa Rica,

declaring that he had seen me several times in that town, and that it gave him great pleasure to meet me. "For," said he, "I know who you are. You are the Priest of the Free-thinkers."

I hesitatingly admitted it—not feeling inclined just then to explain or to argue.

"Ah," he continued, "we want more men like you in this country. I know all about Martin Luther."

"The cassock does not make the priest," and in spite of *not* usually wearing that garment, I was generally recognised for what I was—the "pae Ingles," and any observable difference between myself and my Roman brethren was put down rather to nationality than to lamentable schism. That the English in anything should be like other people would have been very surprising indeed! I usually rode about the country in riding breeches and an alpaca jacket, but with a black soft felt hat that indeed had once been of "clerical" form, and a clerical collar of the most cool and comfortable celluloid manufacture. I remember one rather wet day wearing my grey Burberry riding coat in addition, and hearing a man explain to his companions that it was the dress of my office!

However, whatever my dress, the respect usually shown to the native clergy was always extended to me. Embarrassing sometimes it was, as when one morning I rode past the barracks at Villa Rica about ten men lounging outside suddenly jumped up and saluted. I replied, but never passed that way again.

On another occasion a number of men engaged in making a road across boggy land on the outskirts of a town, stopped work as I passed, and stood holding their broad-brimmed grass hats under their arms, and with their hands palm to palm, waiting for my blessing, which I gave sincerely, considering the nature of their work.

At New Australia a young native once came to me desiring to sell some gold rings in order to raise money with which to bet on a horse race the following day. Knowing nothing of the horses or the race, but wishing to discourage gambling, I simply told the fellow that he would lose his money. That he took as an infallible pronouncement, and declaring that he would not bet on the race, went away very pleased. I have sometimes wondered whether the horse which he fancied really won, and if so, what my confiding neighbour thought of me!

I scored with Halley's comet! By-the-by—what a sight that was—mysterious and awful, and beautiful, and calm, and threatening! The tropical sky, blue even at night, and without a handful of cloud, was pierced by points of stars shining clear yet pale in the presence of the great nebula, which, racing through space, but apparently hanging motionless in the heavens, rained down soft light over all the world, silently; and in the east the silver rim of the new moon prevailed a little, and completed the picture of night made glorious.

Now Flamarion had set the nerves of Paraguay throbbing with his vain predictions about the comet. Some of the native priests showed eagerness to prepare their people for the impending end of all things—a time when money would be of no value. The churches were filled every evening. Several times men asked me (supposing that occult knowledge was mine) whether it was true that the world was really to end soon or not. Reflecting and considering that if I also predicted a sudden end which did not come, I should live to be despised, but that if I said that it would *not* come, and it did, no ill effects would trouble me, I expressed an opinion contrary to that of the alarmist " paes," and the result was creditable to the wisdom of the Anglican Church, since the catastrophe even yet has not taken place.

Not only occult knowledge, but magical powers are, in popular opinion, the natural possession of the clergy. Two men came to me one afternoon, both dressed with all possible care, and, looking very solemn, implored me to "say the words" over one of them and cure him, for he was losing the sight of one eye. Curiously enough I immediately asked this man whether he smoked a pipe, and found out that he did—a very rare thing for a Paraguayan peasant—also that he attributed his blindness to poison put into his pipe by some enemy.

Well, I told the fellow that magic arts were not mine, and that he should repent, and go to confession and ask the good God to cure him; whereat the two men departed very downcast, feeling, and also telling their friends afterwards, that a proud Ingles would not help a poor Paraguayan.

Great respect for the clergy will always be shown by a Paraguayan, even when he is drunk; even when he has been bitten by a snake.

One afternoon as I was having tea at the house of an English colonist who kept a store, my host was urgently called from the sitting-room to the shop. After some time he returned with a worried look, saying that a native had been bitten in the foot by a snake, and had come for a remedy. My host possessed a recently acquired hypodermic syringe and wished to use it, but the native had never heard of such a method of taking medicine, and demanded something that would go down the usual way. The permanganate crystals would have been dissolved and given to him as he desired, but he had drunk a good quantity of "caña" (native rum) already as an antidote, and my friend (perhaps needlessly), being afraid of the result of a mixture, declined to oblige.

Then I went to the shop where people were still endeavour-

ing to persuade the unfortunate man to take the remedy into his foot, and where the poor fellow's wife with one or two other women had arrived before me.

He was obstinate. I was a little behind him and presently stepped forward and laid my hand on his shoulder, saying: "Friend, sit down and put up your leg. You will be a dead man shortly if you do not."

He looked round at me and obeyed without a word. No one there had ever used a syringe, so I directed that the injection should be in the ankle, but the task of getting the needle through the skin was not mine. I watched the operation, and saw the needle bend until the breaking-point must have been very near; it was like giving an injection to an old portmanteau. Suddenly the job was over. I have seen a Paraguayan girl tread with bare feet on a hot ember and never know it!

When we left, the snake-bitten man remained nursing his leg and moaning, and at last weeping freely at the prospect of death. He was sure of a fatal termination to such absurd doctoring, he said, but he feared not to die; he only was broken-hearted at having to leave his horse and his boy.

However, he did not succumb. Maybe we cured him, maybe it was not a poisonous snake at all. The sequel, however, was serious, for his "wife" was so furious that he had not lamented leaving her, along with the boy and the horse, that she would have nothing further to do with him.

In the interior of South America the "occasional services" of a priest are many and varied. Whether Roman or Anglican, he is called upon to exercise his wisdom and authority in ways undreamt-of by people not familiar with his circum-

stances. The wisdom of a priest may be taken for granted, and the following story will illustrate the peculiar practical importance of his position in remote districts.

In a village on the banks of the Paraguay, a young German somehow got into the hands of the police, and had highly incensed the commissary who, in a drunken rage, decided to have the prisoner shot. The execution was all arranged—the men told off for the duty—the prisoner placed against the wall, bound, but not blindfolded—and the last moments of his life were being prolonged in order that his tormentor might the more enjoy himself by storming his ears with heaping insults, when a young priest appeared upon the scene and demanded opportunity to do his duty.

Spiritual authority secured a sudden calm. The chief of police stood silent as the black-robed man of God became principal actor in the scene, speaking to the doomed man of those things demanded by the occasion.

In a few minutes the priest solemnly approached the commissary, but instead of speaking, pulled out a revolver and pressed the muzzle against that officer's head.

"Señor Comisario," he cried, "order your men to release the prisoner, or I will now blow your brains out."

Not without orders would the soldiers do anything whatever even to defend their chief! They stood motionless until a moment later the command so insisted upon secured activity. But the revolver still firmly pressed where it first had been held.

"Soldiers," cried the priest, "take this man into custody. I will be responsible."

And into custody that man went until orders came from Asuncion concerning him.

The administration of justice in a republic of semi-civilised people presents peculiar difficulties which are seldom under-

stood by foreign critics, and presidents and other high officials are blamed for a condition of affairs which they have little power to remedy. Popular opinion is ever a great force and it is not always righteous. Moreover, a half barbarous people have no conception of "law"—what this or that official declares is to be done is all the law they can comprehend, and the difficulty of getting fit persons to fill all the lower posts in the government of such a country as Paraguay, even if the chief Ministers of State were above suspicion, may be imagined.

On my first journey to Paraguay there was told to me the story of a certain couple of friends—a judge and a colonel who, being stationed together in a small town, habitually spent their evenings together gambling. One morning the man of war appeared with his head tied up, having unaccountably received a wound in the ear. As a matter of fact, during a discussion the previous evening the judge had nearly bitten it off!

That is a true story, and, indeed, that such a thing might easily happen may be readily understood from the following incidents.

A certain Irish friend of mine was made the administrator of a Government colony on the banks of the Paraguay River. Opposite stretched the line of the Argentine shore, offering an opportunity for smuggling and for the disposal of goods, however acquired, by any vendor who could get across the river. Here, then, was work, and Irish energy soon made the name of Justice stink in the nostrils of illegitimate traders, the chief of whom happened to be a highly placed Government official. By-and-by the zealous administrator was called to Asuncion to give an account of himself and to make things more comfortable. Explanations and arguments and protests and threats passed between the Irishman and the judge, until

at last the latter swung round and smacked the other's face. A second later that judge was picking himself up from the floor and two or three soldiers were sitting on the Irishman —who subsequently was advanced to a higher post in another part of the country.

Several times I myself assisted at the court of justice. My first impression of the court house at Ajos will long remain with me. The big old church stood in a grass-covered square, surrounded by mud huts, thatched and whitewashed. One of those huts was the court house, inside which were a few chairs and benches and a table for the secretary and another for the judge. The floor was of mud. A "cambushí" or earthenware waterpot stood on the floor by the wall with an enamelled tin cup conveniently near for the use of thirsty persons. Guards were posted outside the street door.

The examination of witnesses went on solemnly and was recorded at excessive length. An old hag in her one garment, the "tupoi" or chemise, came in to replenish the cambushí. By-and-by a little black pig wandered in, and at a convenient moment the young secretary attempted to drive the animal out, but little black pigs are active, and the judge had to use his persuasive powers before we could get on with the case under consideration.

I lunched with that judge afterwards. With four of his sons we sat at table, while the female side of the family attended to our needs. I remember asking the judge how many children he had, to which he replied: "Seven by my wife," and then, after a pause for mental arithmetic, "and eight others."

I, of course, aroused considerable curiosity, which, however, was marked by well-bred restraint. The judge's wife asked about the English Church and, of course, the celibacy of the clergy was mentioned, and when it was explained that I had

liberty to marry, she remarked: "Then a girl could fall in love with you." I said that it was possible.

I had siesta there and the old lady came to pull off my top-boots.

That same judge showed great confidence in one of our English colonists, who had obstinately refused either to help in the killing of locusts or to pay the alternative fine to funds, and for that reason had been sent to the lock-up. One night the judge (or chief of police) wished to take all his available men away somewhere for a certain purpose, so he calmly asked the "Ingles" to take charge of the lock-up and of the other prisoners—and of the town, I suppose—until his return. That was done and afterwards the faithful warder was again placed under restraint!

But now let me talk of the simple religion of the country people.

In the sparsely populated districts through which I generally travelled, priests were seldom seen; even small towns provided with churches often had no resident priests but were served by a pae who had two or three in his charge, and who seldom had service except in the place where he dwelt. For the baptism of children in rural districts women are appointed to officiate, but they may not charge for doing so. These women baptists are greatly respected. They usually possess images of some saint and have little oratories in their houses, decorated with candles, flowers, etc., and on certain days quaint little religious processions may be seen winding along through the long grass of the countryside.

All over Paraguay wooden crosses are erected where violent deaths have taken place—usually light ones about four feet high, but not infrequently substantial ones of much greater height; and they have double cross pieces, seemingly

PART OF ASUNCION MARKET.

significant of Eastern influence. Candles are often lighted and placed at their feet held up by a few stones, and fine linen scarves with much lace work at the ends are left wound around the weather-stained wood. Flowers, too, may be found there, and sometimes a woman kneeling.

Once during a severe drought the baptising woman of my district organised intercessions for rain before one such cross, and relays of women prayed without ceasing for the mercy of Heaven. Cheeses were given away to ensure the attendance of pleaders.

Animal sacrifices may be said still to be offered in Paraguay, although, indeed, unknown to the wild tribes. It is a common thing for a person to vow to give a cow or a sheep as a thank-offering for some benefit received, and when the animal is butchered the meat is given away to friends and neighbours and all comers, and a feast is held. The value of a cow is about equal to a camp labourer's wages for one month.

The great respect shown to parents and all elderly relatives is a striking feature of Paraguayan life. Frequently may be seen not children only, but grown men, fathers of families, after an absence longer than usual, standing with head bowed over uplifted hands, while a decrepit, half-naked old man or woman makes over them the sign of the Holy Cross. Then conversation begins.

Whether this habitual respect for elderly relatives, or the simple religious attitude of the natives of Paraguay, will be continued much longer is doubtful, because the schoolmaster is abroad in the country, and although he may be zealous, he is only slightly qualified intellectually and perhaps not at all in morals. But Paraguayans value education. In the time of Doctor Francia (1812) Paraguay was a seat of learning superior to Buenos Aires and other River Plate centres, but

naturally the cultured life was confined to a few leading families. Sixty years ago the devastating war quenched rather much the lamp of learning. The ignorant Paraguayan, however, has the virtue of being able to realise his condition and is always anxious to improve, and particularly in the country districts the desire for education is very manifest, the peasant a little better off materially than his fellows often going to considerable expense in sending his children, even his daughters, to the best school within reach.

Compulsory education is the law, and as far as possible it must be in the Spanish language. Unfortunately the Government seems to expect teachers to render their services gratuitously, for they are miserably paid and irregularly. Given, however, a teacher of sorts, children flock for instruction from afar. Often, when riding miles distant from any school, have I noticed the long grass waving in serpentine curves, and presently, from a well-worn path some six inches wide, has emerged, on what I must call the road, a file of pupils, some tiny tots, others with moustaches sprouting, each carrying a slate and perhaps a book. A wide-brimmed straw or grass hat, sporting a blue or crimson ribbon or cord according to the political sympathies of the family, shades each dusky boy, but a mass of well-groomed hair is usually sufficient protection and ornament for the girls. Of clothes there is almost the minimum—just shirt and trousers for the males, and for females ditto, minus the trousers.

Barefooted they cross the track and look and smile and disappear in the sunburnt, grassy expanse.

At New Australia the Government school was considered rather a good one in every way. The building was a mere oblong shed, thatched, and with one side and the ends closed by mud walls, the other side was quite open except for a barrier to keep out wandering animals. The school furniture

consisted of rough benches, a small blackboard, a table, and a kettle and a maté cup.

There sixty children were instructed by the master and his assistant mistress. The latter was an intelligent looking young woman, nicely dressed and wearing boots, who also rode to and from school using a side saddle. There was a refined and "triste" air about her. The master was a mere peasant youth who owed such book learning as he possessed to his own efforts; keen on his work, but a notoriously and indescribably bad character.

The writer took a certain interest in this native school and, indeed, was once a member of a small committee formed to preside over the annual examination of the pupils. It was only one day's work, but a long one, and there were several amusing incidents. Guarany had to be resorted to occasionally, but officially it was all Spanish, and the children appeared bright and eager.

Towards the end, the master, in a *viva voce* examination of a boy, asked him to describe the difference between a bull and a bullock—the correct and smiling answer being: "A bull is wild and savage, but a bullock is tame."

The girls presented needlework of various kinds, and I think of surprisingly good quality, and then the boys went through their military drill. The barefooted urchins manœuvred with fine precision and zest. Many had provided themselves with fowling pieces, and the rest paraded with sticks, but all were proud and happy, and not least their rascally commander.

All went brilliantly until the warriors, marching in column, disturbed a snake, and then disorder was sudden and excitement great—the commanding officer being the only one with boots!

One of my fellow-examiners was master of another school

in the district, a man whom I had not previously met but whom I saw once again—during a revolution.

During times of political disturbance school-work is naturally interfered with; the elder boys perhaps go to swell the ranks, and masters possibly may command rebel troops or have to fly as " suspects " to the Argentine.

My friend did neither; school being impossible, he remained at home caring for his family.

The Government's need of men is what troubles civilians, for when it becomes urgent Government agents have a happy knack of attending dances uninvited and carrying off the young men to serve in the army, making a commotion that must be left to the imagination. If the struggle be long continued, every man able to bear arms is called up or raked up, and the only alternative to serving on one side or the other is to hide in the depths of the forest until the trouble is over.

My friend went to cover like a partridge, and his patient wife went with him. In such case, of course, the difficulty of getting food is great, and the cooking of it dangerous. The weather, too, is a consideration, and the constant anxiety and alarm.

Well, my schoolmaster and his wife suffered so; and I saw them one evening creep out of the woods doubtless in search of friends.

Hunting for buried treasure is a pastime in the delightful seclusion of Paraguay, where the distinction between work and play is not always very discernible. It is, indeed, a serious pastime involving danger and secrecy and all the thrill of a gambling adventure.

Much treasure was buried by wealthy natives to preserve it from the rapacity of Lopez, but as in his day four-fifths of the males of Paraguay were slain, and many entire families

cruelly exterminated, the hidden valuables were often not recovered, and wolves and anteaters now slumber in the brushwood above the forgotten silver and jewels. In the wild, thickly wooded, undulating country the probability of successful search for these hoards is remote, unless some indication of site be known to the seeker, but clues are not infrequently found or imagined, and in the night hours, preferably when there is a helpful moon, eager parties stealthily go prospecting, measuring, and excavating—and live to try again. Sometimes, indeed, there leaks out news of treasure trove, which keeps alive the interest in such doings. Often have I noticed the hollow sound made by my horse when stepping over a certain spot, which, however, was never examined by me.

Near Loma Rugua lived an interesting old couple. The ancient dame is the one person of true "criollo" type amid the surrounding round-faced, high-cheeked, copper-skinned, indigenous population. (Look up one of the long-faced Spanish princesses by Velasquez, add forty years to her age, tan her skin, dress her in a cotton garment of sorts—and that is my old lady.)

In the time of Marshal Lopez, whose name is still mentioned with bated breath, as if his disturbed spirit might easily make a sinister appearance, her father fell into disfavour and soldiers suddenly swooped down on the "quinta" house, taking off all that belonged to him—money, arms, animals, and family to an unknown fate; all except a slim little dark-haired daughter who fled afoot, guided and protected by a Guarany slave boy only slightly older than herself.

Picture the fugitive children making their way across country, afraid of so many things, but especially of their own species; without food, without sleep, without rest, except in meagre snatches. They travelled by night, and in the daytime the girl hid in the woods while the boy faithfully foraged

for oranges, guavas, and other fruit and obtained a little food from the peasantry. A hundred miles they journeyed before staying their flight, and then they settled down and grew up man and wife. Darby and Joan they were when I knew them half a century afterwards, living in a comfortable mud house, owning a few head of cattle, and asking nothing more of life.

Near by lives José, an individual who appears to thrive with little effort. He has two wives and two establishments quite near together, each consisting of a house, a shed filled with tobacco and maize, a "chacra" well planted with mandioca, sweet potatoes, etc. Sometimes his two wives with their progeny may be seen packed into one huge ox-cart going happily together with their lord to the nearest town for some domestic purpose; which is his real spouse only José knows.

When the civil registry was established in the country, and it became plain that a man could have only one legal wife, and which woman that was had to be definitely decided, there was some consternation caused, and also a discriminating "general post," but José weathered the storm.

Visitors arrived one evening for José, who proved to be two young men from Buenos Aires. Away in that distant city a lady had died, leaving, in a faded letter, details of a store of valuables buried by her relatives in the time of the dictatorship.

The fascination of a search for buried treasure stirred certain masculine minds and wills, and in due time arrangements were made for a trip up river to investigate and to satisfy the curiosity of youth.

At length José was discovered. José had somewhat to do with the matter in hand, for, as a small boy leading the bullocks, he had been present at the burying of the stuff. With his help it might perhaps be recovered, without it, never, for the details of the site given were scanty. José had survived all

who had ever possessed any personal knowledge of the treasure buried so many years before, and the exact spot was stamped clearly in his mind, but it was impossible to describe it minutely enough for other persons to make certain of the place. It was a long way off, on the edge of the great northern marshes. José was not much inclined to lead anyone there. He was afraid. There were memories that made him shudder. He would not go.

By-and-by, however, his fears were overcome and a little expedition set forth.

Early one morning a small cart with only two bullocks creaked out of the paddock, and made its way along the rolling plain accompanied by a few horsemen, who rode along with the tall grass wetting them thoroughly and casting its seed upon their soaking top boots.

All went well the first day, but great uneasiness of mind soon developed in José, and a deep dejection settled upon him. He was not well. He was very unwell. During most of the third day he lay in the cart, and finally declared that he could go no further. All efforts to arouse him to a sense of duty were unavailing. He was dying—and verily he looked it, shuddering and shivering and moaning. It was not malaria—it was nerves—bad nerves. Curses only made him worse.

The camp was pitched at the edge of a wood. In Paraguay forest and plain alternate abruptly; there are no open glades in the woods and there are no trees straggling out beyond the others to the grassland; a dense and almost impenetrable wall of verdure rises straight from the open prairie.

On a prostrate tree at the forest's fringe the two strangers sat and discussed matters. Their fire, a short distance away, lit up the cart and the despondent figure of José. Night birds alone broke the stillness, particularly one which was attempting continually to sing down the scale, failing always to finish

the octave, but mournfully persevering in its futile attempts. The marshy plain in front of them was thickly covered with rank grass and weeds, all now covered by the curtain of night, but on every single spike and stem a firefly glowed and gleamed with astonishing brilliance so that a whole sea of golden light glittered and sparkled to the horizon. It was a marvellous scene—a veritable fairyland.

"Damn," exclaimed one Argentine, and "Damn" echoed the other; at least, that is the English of it.

Next day the cart was headed homewards, and the search for treasure ended in dreams.

José still lives and thrives, but he will neither go for that treasure nor speak much about it. The country is possessed of devils. He is more afraid of the dead than of the living—and they upset his stomach!

LLAMAS.

facing p. 72.

CHAPTER V

DEEDS OF VIOLENCE

It seems necessary to say something about wild animals and other manifestations of animate nature if these pages are to convey a right impression of the tropical or sub-tropical parts of South America. There is no lack of material from which to take a portion that may suggest the whole.

Frogs first, then. They are plentiful, some very huge and repulsive, others small and brilliantly coloured with crimson or yellow spots on a dark ground—perhaps that snakes may mistake them for flowers. When riding along a woodland path one day, I came upon a snake just about to swallow a frog which he had captured. The frog was held by the stern an inch or two from the ground, but his captor was so alarmed at my approach, that he let go his hold and slid off into the wood, and the frog promptly hopped away in the opposite direction. It was very singular that snake and frog did not go together!

In Asuncion I once witnessed a strange invasion of frogs such as that which plagued Egypt. Small frogs, an inch or an inch and a half long, covered all the footways and streets of the city so that it was impossible to walk without treading either on a live one or on one that had already suffered. At the doors of the Cathedral women were busy with brooms refusing admission to the sacred edifice. I never heard of such a thing happening before or since, but the natives showed no amazement at the sight, which, I think, lasted only one or two days.

Shortly after my arrival in Paraguay, I was sitting on my verandah with two youths born in the country, when two or three large frogs came hopping into the lamp-light.

"Would you like to see them eat fire?" one young man inquired, and then fetched a blazing piece of wood from the kitchen and started chopping with a cutlass at the glowing mass. As the red-hot pieces fell to the floor, the frogs hopped up and swallowed them, and kept on coming for more. It was a most extraordinary sight and one for which I have no explanation whatever.

The Isondú (that is its Guarany name) is a glorified glow-worm, which shows four or five distinct yellowish-white lights down each side and two red lights at its head. It is about an inch long, and the lights are very bright, as all such lights are in the tropics, and in the darkness it looks like a shining jewel. By day its appearance is very insignificant. This beautiful creature is scarce and only seen about the time of the ripening of the maize.

The rhea, or South American ostrich, is found wherever there is open country, and the Indians are very fond of its flesh. My friends at Estancia Pacurí had a very tame one, which ran constantly at liberty around the grounds, taking the food that was given it and also supplementing the fare by swallowing babies' shoes and other oddments which might give exercise to its digestive powers. It developed a weakness for lumps of soap and became clever at snatching the slippery cakes from the washer-women's tubs and benches which permanently occupied a position under a spreading tree.

One day as I arrived he performed his usual thievery, and one exasperated woman grabbed at his neck below the bulge made by the soap, which she fiercely endeavoured to force up again. There was a whirl then, with wings in the middle, and brown arms and legs, and a sinewy neck and the head of an ostrich and of a woman bobbing about. But the soap was never recovered. The washer-woman stopped for breath, and the bird walked off looking very indignant.

Enough! Let me get back to *homo sapiens.*

It was my lot in Paraguay to come into contact with several men who had been connected with the British Army in one way or another. One was the parish priest of a country church, a sad case, a man who seldom officiated and who never paid any other priest to do so for him, a man whose dirty, slovenly dress was in keeping with his person, and whose every feature was marked by over-indulgence in alcohol. He spoke a little English, and I found that he had served as chaplain with an Irish regiment through the Afghan War. He was an Italian, and I could only imagine his sad history.

Another man was quite a different case. He was a Paraguayan and the chief of police at Yegros, where in the hotel we met and dined together. He looked quite fit for his work—the work of a soldier—and his khaki uniform fitted well his broad shoulders, and with his top boots and clinking spurs and great cavalry sword he looked alert, well fed, and well groomed. A few years before he had left Paraguay for urgent reasons and soon found himself penniless in Buenos Aires, and, being without resources, he engaged himself to help with a cargo of horses destined for the use of the British Army in South Africa, having not the faintest idea where South Africa was. He managed to survive the seasickness, fed and watered the horses in his charge, and on arrival at Cape Town enlisted with enthusiasm. His experiences with the British Army were novel and vastly interesting to him, and in course of time he acquired some familiarity with the English language and a great admiration for everything English. At Yegros he drilled his small force in most approved style, and put his political opponents in the stocks at the first hint of a disturbance. Stocks are firm.

His English was rather broken, but he chatted away in it with evident pleasure.

"Señor," he said, "I like to speak English. When I speak English I feel that I am a great person, but when I have to stop I remember that I am a poor Paraguayan!"

Travelling by train from Asuncion to Villa Rica, I noticed an Englishman in the coach who was evidently a stranger to the country, although his dress was very much that of a cowboy, and so I made his acquaintance and was able to put him on his way a little. He had just arrived in Paraguay, and almost immediately he went away into the interior to stay with an Englishman engaged in lumbering. The trees were felled, their trunks squared, and many small rafts were formed that might in flood-water be carried down the Tebicuari River to the Paraguay.

A good many men were employed at the camp, and I was told that such another collection of ruffians could not be found in the Republic—and that is saying much! Several times I met my chance acquaintance and ultimately discovered that he was the son and heir of Lord R——. He took kindly to the rough life, was soon burnt as brown as a coffee berry, and picked up the Guarany language current at the camp. In time he returned home and entered the Grenadier Guards.

At the Coronation of King George, Paraguay was invited to send a representative to London, and for this a civilian was chosen who was instantly made a soldier and a colonel in order that he might wear a brilliant uniform in London.

One astonishment after another awaited that Paraguayan as he journeyed across half the world and took part in all the great State functions that were held on the happy occasion of that overwhelming assembly of rank and power, but on his return he declared that the greatest surprise of all was that once a noble lord in the uniform of the "Guard Royal" began to converse with him in Guarany!

We had a colonist on New Australia, German by birth, but

a naturalised British subject, who had been an officer in a Scots regiment and had married a Highland girl. Probably he had left the army on account of his intemperate habits. Like most of the settlers, his wealth was in cattle; it was, however, his young wife who attended to the animals, donning her husband's trousers and riding after them when the minimum of her housework was done. There was one child—a boy—about seven years of age at the time of which I am writing.

In the middle of a peaceful, sunny morning a youth rode up to my house in great haste to inform me that a fearful tragedy had taken place in that queer Anglo-German home. The man was away in Asuncion. His wife had left the boy alone in the house after breakfast while she went on foot to borrow some article from her nearest neighbour, whose shack stood a mile and a half away. Returning across the open camp, she "cooeed" on approaching the house, but, getting no reply, was instantly filled with alarm. Hurrying in, she found the rooms ransacked and left in disorder, and presently was stricken with the horrid sight of her little son lying in a hole or pit near the house, stabbed to the heart, and with his throat ferociously cut.

I rode off as quickly as possible and found indeed that it was so. The poor, half-demented mother was sitting on a bench in front of her house wailing, and neighbours who had arrived sat by her side, having much ado to prevent her from throwing herself down the hole where her child's body had been found.

There was no clue as to the author of the crime, but a gun and a few other things had been taken, amongst them the sporran, which was later found in the woods with its silver parts missing. Some people imagined the crime to be the work of Indians; others, with great reason, suspected a family of professional assassins living in the district.

A coffin was being made by a friendly colonist, but two soldiers mounted guard at the house and said that the body must lie as it was on the table until the arrival of the judge from Ajos.

The bereaved woman sat looking out over the camp for her husband, whose return was about due.

"And he will kill me when he does come," she cried; and she imagined that every person or horse in the distance was her returning spouse.

The family had but one friend on the colony—an old bachelor who had been my cook and housekeeper for some time, and who then lived some three leagues away, and I noticed his non-appearance at the scene of the tragedy.

"How is it that W—— is not here?" I asked.

No one could say more than that the woman had asked for him many times, and that he delayed and appeared disinclined to come.

I went to fetch him, and, riding together across the camp, he told me that he was afraid to face the ordeal, and he stayed but a short time, for, at the first sign of hysterics on the part of the woman, his face blanched and he mounted and rode away.

The mother gave way to me about the place of burial—it had to be in our little graveyard—and the soldiers also meekly allowed me to coffin the poor body and to start for the burial-place with it in a bullock cart. Just then the judge arrived, and we took off the lid for him to see the remains before they were laid in the little enclosure beside a cluster of palm-trees.

The husband did not return until a week later, which made a trying period for us all, and there was no subsequent trouble between the man and his wife about the murder.

My first cook and factotum on the colony was this man W——, an Englishman who had wandered over the wild

places of the world, served "out West" in the American Army, and was very proud of the number of army blankets which he carried away with him. But—he was not really a cook, so the arrangement lasted only a short time before we parted good friends.

This man had sold his allotment of land of one hundred and twenty acres, and, of course, could not obtain another grant, which explains why, after leaving me, he was obliged still to go and work for wages. His new employer had land and kept a store and acted as butcher, enabling us to get meat once a week in our part of the colony. The shop was two or three miles from my house, but I had two quite near neighbours—the old postmaster and a widow with two girls and a boy in their teens. When W—— left me, this good woman and her children attended to my needs.

Five or six weeks after the murder, "meat day" came round, and the postmaster went for his meat, and, on returning about eight or nine a.m., crossed over to my house with a look of deep concern. He told me that W—— had gone mad and was coming after me to kill me!

At daybreak that morning the household of his employer was taking the usual early maté and biscuits when W—— came in, armed ostentatiously with a revolver and a huge knife, minus its sheath. He was looking strange and preoccupied, and neglected the early repast.

"Ho!" exclaimed one man at the table, "why are you carrying that great knife in your belt, without a sheath?"

"The better to use it quickly," came the reply, and, jumping up and flourishing the unpleasant piece of steel, the wild-eyed man began declaiming against *me,* and, vowing that he would have my life, he burst away from the startled assembly before anyone could stop him. At least, nobody did stop him, nor did they pursue him or even send me a warning. Only

when the old postmaster returned with his meat two or three hours afterwards did I hear of this affair. Since, however, I was found still alive, the question arose as to the whereabouts of the madman—for W——'s actions could only be explained by a sudden failure mentally. He had not appeared, and did not appear. All the morning I waited for his visit, for to leave my house was to enter narrow, tortuous forest tracks, and only in the afternoon did I make a short excursion. The news had caused some consternation in the colony.

Just as daylight began to fade I sat down to my frugal dinner, being alone in the shack except for my boy waiter, who, having placed my soup on the table for me, left the room and wandered out into the paddock which surrounded the house. A minute or two later he came bursting into the room, gasping out: "Mr. W—— is coming! Mr. W—— is coming!"

He was certain that he had seen W—— coming along the track, bareheaded, and carrying in his hand what appeared to be a revolver. He was still some distance away and coming slowly.

"Well, go to the gate and watch," I said, "and if you see plainly that it is W——, run and tell me, and then get off home as fast as you can."

The next few minutes will not easily fade from my memory. Mechanically taking a spoonful of soup, I considered the case, and decided not to shoot at sight, and then that I would trust to overcome him by mental power alone; for which reason my ever-loaded revolver remained in the next room.

The boy came running back to say that he had mistaken a passing native for W——. Then I finished the soup.

Another anxious day passed in the same way, except that there were no false alarms.

Meanwhile W—— was missing, and on the third day we

WEAVING.

VANITY BAG MAKING.

facing p. [illegible].

began to be concerned about him and to think of searching for him; but in that wild country there was little hope of finding one who did not wish to be found, and nothing was done beyond the making of inquiries in neighbouring hamlets. As I was due in other parts of the Republic, the mystery was left for others to solve.

Before my return a fortnight later, the poor man's body had been found in the forest, only a few hundred yards from where he had lived. He had taken off his coat and opened a vein in his arm with a razor, and the wounded limb had been further mangled by wild things. A shallow hole was dug alongside the body, which was pushed into it with poles. I went to the spot and read part of the burial office, since clearly the man was insane, and amongst the weeds and bushes I found his old brown leather-backed Prayer-Book, presented to him by his mother nearly forty years back.

It transpired also that when the German colonist left on his visit to Asuncion he called upon W—— and asked him to go and stay with his wife during his absence, as she and the boy were alone in the house. His friend agreed to do so, but, hating the possibility of evil gossip that might arise, he had put off going day by day until the tragedy occurred. R.I.P.

So many dreadful things occur on the confines of civilisation that mental equilibrium is only maintained by an extraordinary number of ludicrous events and sights and circumstances such as are never seen or experienced " at home."

To watch monkeys in their haunts is certainly an entertainment, and to see one in your garden stealing a pineapple or a cob of maize, and running off with the booty under his arm, is screamingly funny. The common monkey of Paraguay is a very thin fellow—the spider monkey—but there is another one, much larger and heavier, and also more noisy—the howl-

ing monkey—which is about three feet high and almost black, and is sometimes on that account called "black monkey"; but the female is very much lighter—at least, it was so with the only couple that I ever saw.

Several times I have heard them howling, and although informed about the dreadful roar they emit, I felt sure, on the first occasion, that what then echoed through the forest was not the howling of any monkey, but certainly the furious uproar of two fighting jaguars.

I took my only arm, the revolver, and went to investigate, but saw only a startled ring-tailed racoon disappear before me; the songsters were far away.

Two men, new to the country and obliged to camp out one night, were so alarmed by the roaring of these animals that they passed the night up a tree—to the great delight of all the colony boys when they heard about it.

Alligators are plentiful in Paraguay, so that one may be found in almost every pond, although, indeed, they take cover very cleverly when so inclined. They travel about the country when water becomes scarce, and I know of one being killed on the verandah of a house. Small alligators emerge from the egg perfect in form, and have only to develop in size.

One day a friend of mine was fishing on the banks of the Paraguay, hoping for breakfast, and watching a floating island (camelote) moving slowly by. A tug at his line aroused his expectations, but, on pulling in his catch, it proved to be a baby alligator—a foot long, tail and all—squealing in agony and fear. Pitifully he was about to do his best for the youngster when the old mother dived furiously towards him from the floating island, obliging him to run up the bank with the small reptile waving behind him.

As if alligators were not plentiful enough, a neighbour of mine put some eggs (which are very like hen eggs, but without

a pointed end) under a sitting hen. It was a singular thing to do, but the hen sat on them with her own eggs, and there would have been a startling result if the patient and unsuspecting bird herself had not come to a sad end a few days afterwards.

A marshy land like Paraguay produces a variety of reptiles, and snakes are numerous, although I was a whole year in the country before seeing one, which proves that a traveller passing hastily through a country may easily miss noticing something very characteristic of it.

A rattlesnake once gave me an exciting five minutes in Brazil, where they are so common that a friend of mine, in order to rid his estate of the reptiles, offered a small reward for every rattle taken to him. Ultimately he gave up the business, believing that at last the articles offered him were brought from afar and not, as he stipulated, "home grown."

My rattlesnake lay in my path (a mule track) on a steep hillside, with angry and alert head raised above his coils, and evincing a determination to dispute the right of way. My fears that he would take flight were groundless, for this snake is one that will not easily turn tail; but I kept my eye on him, as, having nothing to fight with, I went back a yard or two and broke off with my fingers the branch of a guava-bush. Advancing again, I ignored the cruel-looking waving head, failed to ask him what he thought of *my* head, and gave him a whack on the coiled-up body that astonished him and caused him immediately to dive down the bank, there covered with grass and scrub.

Inspecting cautiously, it pleased me to see my enemy only about three feet below, but quite alive, coiled up again, and with head raised threateningly in my direction. From the outer edge of the path the bank fell steeply down, so, placing my heels on the very edge and sitting on them, I leaned

forward and gave a great sweep at that head with such force that the earth gave way beneath me, and down on my back end I slid with lively dread. However, my aim had been good once more, and the rattlesnake lay harmless between my feet—a beautiful specimen, seven years old, according to the number of rattles, about forty inches long, and with long fangs like a cat's claws.

As I carried him home on a stick, to the alarm of timid passers-by, he revived, and his destruction had to be completed.

A peculiarity of the rattler is that it does not lay eggs, but brings forth its young. This I discovered by riding over one in a motor-car, bursting it, and spilling forth the little ones from its middle.

Besides the rattler there are at least six other species of poisonous snakes in tropical South America, and many non-poisonous ones. The venomous ones are immune from the poison of their own species, and there is one large black snake, called the mussurama, itself non-poisonous, which is immune from all poison, and with impunity fights the most deadly serpents, swallowing antagonists his equal in size.

Happening once to catch a snake awkwardly in my hands, my thumb was by it bitten and worried dog-fashion, which I was glad to see, for no poisonous snake would have behaved in so violent and brutal a manner, and although smarting, I knew that I was safe.

Boas are harmless unless of great size, small ones a couple of yards long cannot inconvenience a man. They, however, grow to a length of seventeen feet, and their skins in thickness and toughness are equal to cowhide; in colour, cream, with an abundance of dark brown markings. The largest snake is the anaconda of the Amazon basin, which attains a length of thirty feet.

When the New Australians first camped in the Paraguayan

wilderness, two men returned late one evening from a short expedition, carrying the first boa-constrictor which they had killed, and which they laid outside their tent to be skinned on the morrow. Two of their companions, however, returned much later, and, seeing the huge snake lying there in the moonlight, attacked it very heroically with cutlasses.

The Brazilian is the *bête noire* of the Paraguayans, who accuse the imperial troops of excessive cruelty during the war. He is really, perhaps, a shade darker, and most certainly so where negro blood manifests itself.

I saw a family arrive on the colony from Brazil: horses, mules, dogs; strange solid-wheeled carts; one or two men-servants, one or two women-servants; a black woman (strange sight in Paraguay); two grown-up sons, in appearance "toasted Brazilians," but really the offspring of a plump and brown Brazilian mother, and a tall, spare, long-bearded, ancient American who owned all the caravan. They had been some months on the journey, having been delayed by the patriarch's ill-health. The old man wished to end his days amongst English people, although, not having spoken English for thirty years, he then hardly could do so at all. He embraced me warmly when I visited him, but had little time to make many friends before he failed and died.

The funeral party set out across the camp for my new cemetery, leaving a very sad little old woman in the mud hut. A group of men rode with me a short distance behind the bullock cart which served as a hearse. There was little black about us except my cassock, which was tucked up around me, exposing white trousers and top boots.

One strange feature of the funeral was that two women were attending it, sitting on the tail of the cart by the coffin with their bare legs dangling behind. In that part of the world women do not go to funerals. I have never been to such

impressive funerals as those in the wilds. They seem—and are—so *natural,* everything about them perfectly simple, nothing about them *unnecessary.*

When my attention was elsewhere, the women threw into the grave a large cloth, green or blue in colour—some Masonic or Fenian or Confederate ornament or flag; I never inquired about it. The last suggestion would not surprise people who knew how many Confederate officers left the United States of America and went to tropical South America rather than submit to the North.

The old American *was* an American, a white man, an Ingles in the eyes of the Paraguayans, and therefore respected; but his sons could not speak a word of English, and were looked upon as Brazilians, which, indeed, they were, Naturally they could not associate with the English colonists, but only with natives, who, however, gave them a rough time after their father's death.

It chanced that a Paraguayan family gave a dance and invited the Brazilian brothers, one of whom was away. Friends strongly warned the remaining brother against attending the dance, as his enemies were to be there in force; but he was not to be deterred.

Imagine the dance, under a thatched roof, but without walls on three sides, the men all armed as usual, and the brown-skinned women armed with bright eyes and smiles; but all knowing or fearing that murder was about to take place. At last the trouble started, and the young Brazilian was set on by several men armed with knives, and the women fled.

Afterwards the police found three bodies lying there—two dead Paraguayans and the Brazilian, who, however, survived and was taken under arrest to his home. I saw him there two days later, very weak, but standing talking outside the house. His skull was cut by a slash with a cutlass; by the side of his

spine was a deep wound evidently inflicted with a broad-bladed knife; on his left breast was the wound that most troubled him—a small, deep puncture of a dagger; and he had four lesser wounds. Yet when he needed a drink of water he tottered a few steps to get it himself. Of such stuff are the wild men made!

My arrival was opportune, for the much-wounded man had received orders to go to Ajos to be tried, whereas he rather desired to go to Villa Rica to be doctored—in itself a journey of thirty-six miles or more. I sent my card to the Judge, requesting that the wounded man might be sent under guard to the doctor, and the concession was made.

A few days after his departure, I followed and found him lodged in a private house with a soldier in front and another at the rear of it. His old mother was attending to his needs, and when she saw me she raced down the yard and embraced me with all the speed and vigour of which she was capable, her eyes wet the while. At that time I knew no Portuguese at all, and probably hers was a most corrupt dialect of the interior. They were dreadfully afraid of "justice" from their enemies.

In Asuncion my friends the then British and American Consuls, and also the Brazilian Minister, were interested in my account of the case, and it was impossible for me to do more than place the facts before them.

A fortnight later the severely incapacitated man escaped and got away to Brazil, probably with the connivance of the authorities. He became a police commissary in a frontier town, and no doubt took his revenge on many a Paraguayan, but it is to be hoped that at least he was sometimes helpful and lenient.

CHAPTER VI

REVOLUTION

Amongst other things that must necessarily be mentioned in this book are revolutions, and it will be sufficient for me to describe some of the days of disorder about Easter, 1911.

I left Asuncion at seven a.m. by a train which chanced to be filled with men travelling down towards the end of the line, where a revolution had broken out. It was the last train allowed to leave the city. At three p.m. we arrived at Maciel, a miserable wayside place, but the station for Caazapá, a town of considerable size. Around the regulation station buildings at Maciel a few mud huts vainly strove to form themselves into streets, and beyond, on every hand, the ground was covered with tree trunks, squared by the deft woodsmen, dragged many leagues through forest, field, and swamp by patient bullocks, and then waiting—waiting still, after remaining there so long that their red or yellow tints had faded to grey—"attending" until they should be conveyed away by train. Farther away still the verdant camps rose gently towards the higher ground of Caazapá, and through all ran the twin steel lines from the capital, curving southwards towards the Pirapó River, where was taking place that of which we were yet ignorant.

The two coaches which plied between Maciel and Caazapá, and the post cart also, had been engaged telegraphically by certain far-sighted passengers, so that four mere bachelors had to bargain for a conveyance to return for them, which it did about six-thirty p.m. My companions were political refugees,

MISSION CHILDREN.

MATACO MISSION CHURCH.

facing p. 88.

sympathisers with the revolt then in progress, and they, having confidence in an Ingles, poured forth the tale of their country's woes as we drove along.

Respectable young fellows, they seemed, sons of "estancieros" in the district.

But the way, always bad, now in the quickly falling darkness, was quite thrillingly bumpy. A bottle of caña (rum) was passed and repassed until I suggested that much caña and much wit could not dwell together. The suggestion and the near approach to the town co-operated in producing a sobering effect; and soon a council of war was held—or a council of prudence! The chief of police at Caazapá, a strong man on the Government side, according to my informants, was a "devil," and not every man can earn that epithet in Paraguay. The question before the meeting was whether to remain in the coach or to alight and creep to their destination. The bolder policy prevailed, and we all rode in together quietly.

On account of the disturbed state of the country, there was no horse waiting for me, and I had to pass two nights in the town before getting on to Cosme Socialist Colony.

During this delay, one evening I saw the chief of police taking out a party of soldiers on some mission—to harry supporters of the revolution, it was said. They were all mounted and looked quite fit and grim, except one man, who was very anxiously examining the lock of his rifle. In the town the few soldiers left were certainly kept on the *qui vive,* keeping up through the night a ceaseless and nervous calling from post to post, and I imagined that fear or excitement gave a peculiar tone to their responsive cries.

Strolling in the morning down to the native church that stood sedately in the grass-covered square, I noticed the emptiness of the streets. Gone were the loafers, gone were the workers; only a few women and children and decrepit old

men were visible. A glimpse at the square explained this, for four or five squads of about twenty men each were being hurriedly drilled by the soldiers who had pressed them willy-nilly into the ranks. Some had new uniforms, some wore their own rags; only at the feet were they uniformly bare, like all the soldiers away from the capital.

The instructors carried whips and their earnestness was evident. Troops were in action not far away, and the earliest hour might find them all fighting, if not for Paraguay, at least for dear life.

There were no spectators but One above, who still showered golden sunlight from the sky. I turned into the church, which was large and cool and dark and quiet. At the high altar the parish priest continued with the Holy Mass. War or tempest, fire or foe—nothing must prevent the offering which our Saviour ordained. Slowly the priest passed, as he prayed, from end to end of the holy table, and the lights shone forth their message of Christ, and a few women knelt around on the floor.

Later in the day I called to make the acquaintance of the parish priest at his house, and failed to find him at home, but was received by a young assistant priest. This latter was at the time reading a book on chemistry and drinking coffee, with which also he regaled me. He was a Spaniard and seemed to feel that, being both foreigners, we possessed a bond of union, proceeding to enlarge upon his hatred of the country, which was deepened by the iniquity of his immediate superior, and volunteering the confidential information that he was about to run away in a few days' time. I sympathised with the young rascal and wished him luck and left, wondering whether the parish priest would connect my visit with his disappearance or not.

The next day, after a ride of about fifteen miles, I reached

Cosme colony, where some fifty English or Australian people were settled. This colony had been founded by diehards from New Australia, who refused to give up socialism when the great body of the colonists came to the conclusion that they had had enough of it. These determined characters were naturally almost all men, and after a year or so of very hard work they sent an emissary to England for the purpose of getting recruits—principally women, and preferably young ones. Scotland was their agent's happiest hunting-ground, whence he embarked several small companies, to the consolation of his friends; and the most amusing documents that I ever read were his business-like reports about each "very suitable," "healthy," "useful" batch of bipeds. It is, however, quite wonderful to find how constantly tears and smiles are mixed. When the girls arrived at Cosme it was to find, amongst other surprises, that their nice frocks and things had to be fairly shared with sister socialists, who by that time were getting reduced to rags.

In my time the socialist régime was coming to an end even on Cosme Colony, and that, indeed, was why the Church was allowed a free hand there at last; for in some unaccountable way the socialist movement has got strongly allied with agnosticism.

I found the colonists very excited about the revolution, for, indeed, the struggle was taking place too near them for comfort. Chiefly they were concerned for their few cattle and horses, acquired after much patient and courageous struggle with adverse circumstance. Above all things, the contending parties needed horses and would secure them by fair or foul means, so the colonists had their animals collected near the houses and their few horses hidden in such sheds and places as were available. I saw two poor women trying to get a horse into their kitchen; one woman was pulling at the bridle while

her companion operated on the other end of the horse—but without success.

Nothing exciting really happened at Cosme; what concerned me most was the news that the train service was completely stopped except for the conveyance of troops. After concluding my work, attended by a youth of about sixteen who was to return with the horses, I rode to Yegros, a small town on the railway, to investigate.

The place was, of course, deserted, but I was met in the street by the only foreigner in the place, a young American storekeeper, who gave me what news he could. The train service was suspended, and, at the suggestion of troop trains, he said that I could not possibly be allowed to use them, although the day before a young Roman Catholic priest had gone by one. The chief of police, Cristaldo by name, was a brute who respected nobody, had taken all the horses, and would take even mine from me. A bloody fight was going on a short distance away; that morning the firing had been heard, and they were preparing to receive the wounded. The previous night the chief of police of some place near had ridden through Yegros with all his men to join the rebellion.

I saw beds being collected together—beds of sorts.

I knew Cristaldo personally, and wished very much to stay and wait for a troop train to come along, but it seemed a hopeless prospect, and so, without even dismounting, I turned back. No sooner had I started, however, than I observed an officer in a brand new uniform, accompanied by a soldier, riding towards me down a by-street, at whom I stared hard to see if he were Cristaldo, and he for his part put spurs to his horse, so that I immediately reined up. It *was* my chance acquaintance, blossomed into an officer of the line.

The anxious official was greatly astonished to see me, and eagerly inquired about the state of the country through which

I had passed. He confirmed most of the American's statements, but looked very serious when he heard of the firing, and saluted and went off.

Meanwhile, unknown to me, my young companion had become a speck in the distance!

On the colony I had service again on Sunday, but in place of a sermon gave a lecture on English Church history, which was appreciated.

A day or two later, there still being no news of the renewal of the train service, I started off on a sixty-mile ride to Villa Rica, where my own horse was. My lay-reader at Cosme and a colony youth were to come with me to bring back my borrowed mount; and I determined to get a safe conduct for them from the chief of police at Caazapá, that "devil" to whom I have referred.

The lay-reader was a tall, military-looking fellow, with a fierce moustache, and a hare-lip, and a taste for writing poetry; and he was very disinclined to go near the police barracks, having been nearly shot there a few weeks before. Staying the night in Caazapá, he had taken a moonlight stroll and passed along in front of the barracks, meditating and generating poems with such intense concentration that he failed to notice a call—a repeated call—to halt, from the flat roof of the barracks; the sentry had already raised his rifle when an officer idling near stopped him from firing. My friend was then arrested and examined and warned against going near the barracks at night.

To our surprise we found the police quarters entirely deserted, everything in disorder, and only a cow in the barrack yard. An old man informed me that the police had gone off during the previous night to join the revolution, and the speaker himself was going about collecting what males were left in the town to form a committee of public safety. The

road to Villa Rica, he said, ran through a forest infested with bandits, which made it impossible for me to proceed.

We went on, however, avoiding the forest and getting down towards the railway, keeping up our strength with sardines and bread.

Early in the afternoon Maciel was reached, and I was overjoyed to see the engineer's motor trolley on the line, feeling sure that a passage would be given me, and that my companions might return home immediately. A young English mechanic and an Italian had journeyed down and mended the telegraph lines, which in various places had been cut, but now they could not persuade the trolley to move in a homeward direction. I waited. Back it had to go, and I was going with it.

It was very exasperating, but the thing would not start, and finally permission was obtained by telegram for it to be harnessed to the station horse. It was then, however, too late in the day to set off, for as the rebels spent the night hours cutting wires, destroying bridges, and tearing up the rails, we shrank from the journey in the dark. A telegram to the Minister of War came through, saying that a great fight had taken place at Cai-Puente (Monkey's Bridge) with complete victory for the Government troops; which news was to some extent satisfactory, although it mattered little to anyone except those immediately concerned. Having decided to remain at Maciel until next day, the young mechanic and I were lying on the grass pensively watching the western sun when the wife of the station-master approached and begged us to sleep in the station-house in order to defend it against parties of hungry fugitive soldiers, who would very probably attack it. The two or three railway "peones" (porters, etc.) had fled, leaving only the station-master and his wife and a servant and two small telegraph operators in the place.

The decision being left with me, I agreed with great gallantry, hoping to goodness that we might come through all right. The station-master himself watched the interview from a little distance, in a helpless state of abject terror, which vanished miraculously when he perceived that we were going to stand by. He said that he had buried all the money except a small amount left in the safe for appearances.

The station buildings consisted simply of a couple of rooms at each end of the small platform, joined by one roof, the intervening covered space being closed at will by gates, and the gates were locked as we entered. The woman came up and asked whether we had arms.

"No," I replied, but my companion pulled out a revolver, very large and very bright. The little fat station-master also pulled out his weapon and flourished it bravely.

"Well," said the woman to me, "you can hit them on the head with one of these bits of iron."

So did this virago dispose of her forces. She also fed us moderately; indeed, the hope of getting something to eat had doubtless influenced me to take part in her defence. Food, however, was scarce in those days, and so was crockery, for one plate of soup was sent out for us, with two spoons and a little bread. My companion was shy about dipping in with me, but I enjoyed the unique experience, although as a matter of fact we did not consume even the little food offered to us.

The telegraph boys locked themselves in their office; the two women went into another room; the station-master and one man sat on a seat; "we two" lay down side by side on the stone floor, with saddle-bags for pillows. It was cold in that open place, and my Burberry was little protection for two, and the stones were hard as well as cold. Stars shone down brightly as I lay planning what to do if anything happened—but nothing happened.

Next morning, after coffee and dry bread, in spite of pressing invitations to remain another day, we set off down the line. It was a beautiful, crisp, sunny, winter morning, yet our speed was poor, for the horse was aged, and also every now and then we found it was necessary for the animal to be unhooked and led across a ditch, while we pushed the car over awkward places. Two of the more important bridges which we crossed were much damaged by fire and axes; the beams of one were still fiery-red and smouldering, so that crossing it was decidedly interesting.

The expedition was thoroughly enjoyable, and we went leisurely along, stopping sometimes to shoot at the little owls, which, perched on the ant-hills, watched us pass, turning blinking heads right round as if fixed with swivels to their bodies.

About midday we reached some high ground and saw in the distance the little town of Iturbe, with several engines and a long passenger train waiting at the platform and flying the Red Cross flag, which caused us to hurriedly get our own vehicle off the line.

By-and-by, seeing no movement in the station, we continued our journey, and found an ambulance train, with only doctors and priests and railway engineers aboard, *en route* for Cai-Puente, but then waiting for our arrival with a report of those bridges. There was also a pilot engine, and an engine which apparently *had been* a pilot, but which was then being dragged along in disgrace.

Without loss of time the train departed, leaving me alone, with a promise that, *whenever* train or pilot engine returned, a stop would be made to pick me up.

There were two little shops in Iturbe, one for groceries and the other for cotton and iron goods. Of course, all the eatables had disappeared, so that I could buy nothing whatever to eat,

INDIAN ROCK PAINTINGS.

TYPE OF INCA BURIAL POT.

facing p. 96.

and disconsolately returned to the station platform to finish my last crust of bread. Few people had noticed our arrival, so that I appeared to have dropped from the skies. When evening approached I went to the "iron goods" store and asked whether I might pass the night on the verandah, but, indeed, a most hospitable reception was offered me. I dined with the family (the storekeeper, his wife, and daughter), and we sat talking until about ten o'clock, when I was sent to bed in most comfortable quarters and with the assurance of being aroused if the pilot engine came in.

No sooner was I in bed (so it seemed) than a thumping at the door aroused my senses to take note of the rumbling of an approaching train. Half clad, with boots unlaced, half my clothes under one arm and my saddle-bag over the other, I raced through the darkness to the desolate, unlighted platform. The pilot engine was returning; next to it was a guard's van; behind was a long train of goods waggons which were being hauled out of the danger zone.

In the van, and fast asleep, were my two companions of the trolley journey, and sitting there on a bag of potatoes in the dimmest possible light I found it difficult to keep awake. The few stations through which we passed were dark and seemed entirely deserted, and how the points were negotiated was a mystery. About one o'clock we reached Villa Rica, the second town in Paraguay, and not a light nor a person was to be seen at the station, through which the engine carried me some distance beyond the platform.

I was the only person who descended from the long train. On a high bank behind the station a crowd of white-robed native women stood quiet and motionless, carrying many dim lights and bundles, at whom I gazed with astonishment. In a few moments they plucked up courage to move in a body towards the train; but I, knowing that at least they were not

meeting me, slipped away all unnoticed towards the town, which is a good distance from the station.

The night was dark and misty, and, walking along the soft, unpaved road, I immediately ran into a group of mounted men armed with rifles, sitting like statues on their horses, listening and watching the train. I had got behind them and not more than three or four feet from the nearest man, entirely unobserved. Two leaders were a little in front of the others, and presently they rode down to the platform, leaving the men motionless.

I hesitated to go on without speaking, lest my retreating footsteps should be followed by a few bullets, so I called out loudly: "*Buenas noches.*" And you should have seen those men jump!

One man exclaimed, "*Es el padre Ingles,*" and they allowed me to continue without question or molestation.

The hotel porter came at last in response to my knocking, and admitted me, although the establishment was closed and he was the only living person there, a new condition of affairs due to a recent police raid with several disagreeable incidents.

The porter-cum-waiter was an old acquaintance, and we had much to tell each other of what had happened during the last few weeks; and it was nearly three a.m. when I got to bed—in a room near the street door. An hour later came an imperative knocking at that door, and then I heard the porter being questioned, evidently about me, for there were mentioned the names of all the places I had lately visited.

In the morning, after partaking of coffee and bread and butter, I sallied forth to see how the various English families in the town fared. They had not been molested, but every native able to carry a rifle had been pressed into the army, and the President had declared that as a last resource he would make the women fight. I was told that my train had been

taken for the ambulance train, hence the crowd of women at the station with milk and eggs, etc., for the wounded. The shortage of food was everywhere getting very serious.

I had left my horse with a bachelor who lived a league outside the town, and another friend kindly lent me his horse that I might go and secure it. Riding through the town, I passed a house occupied by the military, in front of which a couple of officers were seated, smoking, with a boy standing near them. They eyed me with interest, and especially, no doubt, the very nice horse beneath me.

A little farther on a company of about twenty mounted soldiers crossed the street some distance ahead, going along the very road which I needed to take; therefore I hurried on to keep them in view, but without any desire to get very near them. By-and-by the boy who had been attending the two officers galloped past, turning to stare at me as he did so. It looked suspicious, and still more so when the soldiers halted as he reached them, and everyone turned and looked back towards me. I slowed down to even a snail's pace, but presently, to my relief, the whole party moved on, indicating, so I thought, that they had received special orders to respect me.

Still the distance between us was prudently preserved, and fortunately, for within fifteen minutes there was a commotion as a man fell to earth, and his horse fell too, and remained lying kicking on the ground after its rider recovered himself, from which I concluded that it had the gripes.

It was sufficiently disconcerting. The men had been told off for some duty, and, however much they might wish to respect me, I could not expect less than that they would insist on a change of horses. Luckily just there a road diverged from the one we were on, and I quietly took it, keeping eyes and ears strained and being ready for an instant race. After the lapse of some reasonable time I crossed country to the

original road and was happy to see no sign of the soldiers. Five minutes afterwards I turned a corner and walked right into them; at least, their horses were tethered outside a fence around a house. Possibly the man who fell had been hurt.

A mile farther along stood my friend's house, and there was an interesting exchange of views when it was reached. He was incensed against the soldiers because some of them had shot at his "boy" working on the farm, whom they, of course, looked upon as a deserter, if not as a secret sympathiser with the rebellion. Since that incident the young man had become clever and quick at taking cover on the approach of strangers. My English friend was rather a sporting man and possessed a small arsenal—a rifle, two guns, two revolvers—and consequently he feared their confiscation on one pretext or other. For my part, I was delighted to find that my horse was still safe.

When the approach of the soldiers was mentioned, warmth of interest began to be evident. If they came within his gate their object could be only either the arms or the horses, and neither would be delivered up, nor would he let his boy be taken to be tortured. If they entered the grounds he would shout and warn them off, and shoot at once if they failed to retire. His words were few as he gazed at the other house through his glasses, watching to see whether the troop passed on towards us or not.

"By Gad, they are coming!" he exclaimed; and we could see them advancing along the hilly road, raising a cloud of yellow dust.

The loaded arms were all laid handy on the old deal table. We were very quiet. Here was a pretty position for me! It was no use attempting to dissuade him from putting up a fight, and, indeed, foolish and hopeless as his determination was, I rather agreed with it. Clearly, also, I could not

leave my friend, nor interfere with him, nor remain sitting still in a besieged house doing nothing. We were in for an exciting time—but the soldiers rode straight past the gate! Then we had lunch.

The only food in the house was bread and milk, but of that there was abundance, for my host luckily had a full sack of flour, kept a few cows, and had baked the preceding day.

After that enjoyable meal, and after returning the borrowed horse, I set off immediately for New Australia to see how the colonists there were faring. It meant going without dinner, but there would be a good moon—about full—and off I set on the twelve-league ride. It was a peaceful ride, and a lonely one. I nearly always travelled alone by preference, yet on that journey there was an absence of human companionship and activity, not due to the hour, but to the fact that the world was in hiding. By day the land would have appeared equally empty, but at night it was peopled with shadows. The road—such as it was—ran almost entirely through open country, often skirting a forest, only once or twice actually passing through wooded country. There were occasional houses just within the forest, and I am sure that their wakeful inhabitants were stirred by the sound of a horseman cantering by in the night; but there was never a sign of life, except in one place, where the trees and bushes came quite near the track, and I thought that I heard the words "Padre Ingles." I reached my house about eleven p.m., to find not a person in it; worse still, there was nothing either eatable or drinkable except water. And so to bed.

A few weeks later I was with a group of colonists who raised a sudden and hearty cheer as they saw a bullock cart travelling across the plain—a sure sign of peace and of security.

After six years in Paraguay came my move to a chaplaincy

in the mining district of Brazil. I will here say a word about the Australian colonists, whose character and doings have been the subject of much comment. Taken all round, they were fine, typical English people, and their unreasonableness was merely due to exceptional material and social circumstances. They really were ordinary Englishmen, and showed it by vehement abuse of the Government, first of the British and Australian, and afterwards of the one they themselves had set up. Moreover, when the war broke out, their young men flocked home to fight in greater numbers, proportionately to the English residents in the country than the young men of the Argentine, and the proportion from Argentina was greater than from Britain. It is in the blood!

Everyone who has lived in Paraguay any long time loves the country in spite of its many drawbacks; and certainly the day for leaving was a hard one for me, and the event proved that warm hearts beat in the wilds around Ajos.

A presentation was made to me, such as from time to time and in various places well-remembered friends have offered, stirring my heart to gratitude. But this incident was so singular and pregnant with meaning that I may be pardoned for here describing it.

Imagine the low weather-board house of one of the principal colonists, with verandah in front, and backed by the dark green of the forest. Gradually in the golden afternoon there assembled on the lawnlike space before the house an animated group of about three or four dozen adults and many children. About the faces of the adults could be noticed a look of innate strength and independence, which gave a uniform tone through much dissimilarity. The house belonged to one of two colonists who had been deadly enemies for many years, but who had both become firm friends of mine, so that to them equally my departure was of some concern. The in-

tensity of the feud between them had never been realised by me; but the mind of every one else in the little crowd was exercised on the question whether one man would pocket his pride and approach the house, and, if so, whether he would be ordered off; and then, what consequences there might be. It seems a small thing to write about, but everyone held his breath as it were, as the antagonist arrived and slowly and deliberately walked up to the assembled people with a smile that was good to behold.

Then the host made a short speech, and his daughter delightfully read a paragraph or two from a paper held in her trembling hands, and in the name of the school-children presented me with a small gold cross. My words of thanks were quite too weak to express my feelings.

After a little pause, one colonist jumped off the fence on which he had been seated and drew attention to the fact that during the twenty years of the colony's existence many of their good socialist friends had left them from time to time, men who had worked shoulder to shoulder with them and shared their privations and dangers, yet never once had any public notice been taken of their departure. Such a thing as that had been reserved for the padre, after six years on the colony. How was that?

It was a bombshell fired by a not unfriendly fire-eater, and everyone looked as puzzled as I myself felt, until another veteran broke the silence, declaring that this respect had been shown to me because, through all that had happened since the day of my arrival, I had never changed one bit. "Exactly the same," was the verdict passed on me, and being intended as a compliment, so I took it, inwardly wondering.

It certainly was remarkable. I am inclined, of course, to consider that religion is a force making for social unity; it is the cement of society; it is the nerve system which builds up

the body and enables it to retain its form. The disintegrating result of the abandonment of religion had been severely felt by the colony, and, only half understanding why, many individuals were ready heartily to welcome its return.

My work on the colony was faithfully continued and developed under Mr. Limb, whose first equestrian efforts gave me much anxiety. Spanish was another subject that he was obliged to study, and surely this *amende* can hardly be beaten. At a drawing-room meeting he trod heavily on the toe of a native gentleman, whose ruffled feelings he attempted to smooth with a polite apology, but the phrase that somehow came from his lips was: *"Con su permiso!"*

TOBA WOMEN.

TOBA HUT.

facing p. 104.

CHAPTER VII

NATURE AND MAN

These lines about Paraguay may not be concluded without a hint of the beauties of the Iguazú Falls, which are in what was the ancient province of Guayrá, although a few miles beyond the borders of the present Republic of Paraguay.

To reach the falls the Alto Paraná must be ascended, and that river itself is a sight to be remembered. Its steep, wooded, and jungle-covered banks, with high, forest-clothed hills ever rising one behind another in the distance, make its winding course a long panorama of beauty and fertility; and the waters themselves so recently hurled over the Iguazú, or the Guayrá Falls, bubble and swirl and rush along, laughingly conveying their tribute of red mud to the lower lands and to the sounding sea.

About one hundred and thirty miles above Corrientes occur the Apipé Rapids, which extend for about a mile and stretch nearly from bank to bank, forming a boiling, surging, whirling flood, strange and fascinating to look upon, and, of course, very dangerous to navigation. Only small steamers can pass this obstacle, and many a boat has there come to grief.

At Posadas the steam launches crossing over to Encarnacion cannot keep a straight course, but stagger across like drunken men; and upstream the current increases in strength and violence, racing along, tying itself up into innumerable whirlpools, and lining the banks with foam. Often at calling-places the river steamer does not stop, but slows down and sends a boat ashore to land passengers, parcels, and mails on the grassy bank, and, perforce, herself takes a short cruise in the

urgent river until the boat returns. She drops quickly downstream when her engines are going slow ahead.

A few miles inland from the port of San Ignacio in Misiones are the famous Jesuit ruins. On the Paraguayan side are the still finer examples (so I was told) of "Jesus" and "Trinidad," but they are difficult of access and little known. The word "port" used above might be misleading, therefore let me say that there is no landing stage whatever at San Ignacio, and two roughly built huts are the only visible habitations of man.

Three centuries ago, or rather more, the Jesuits established themselves in Guayrá, and after much patient and devoted labour tamed the Indians, and in time caused the erection of astonishingly fine churches, dwelling-houses, storerooms, baths, etc. They built and controlled about thirty towns, from which they had trouble in keeping the Spanish and Portuguese adventurers. Everything was plain and solidly built except that the greatest skill and taste was expended on the churches, which in size and style may be compared with our large parish churches with arches, pillars, capitals, all complete.

The Jesuits were expelled, and now their buildings are roofless ruins. The forest has swept up like the returning tide of the ocean—trees crowd against the outer walls, trees choke the interiors, they even flourish upon the crumbling masonry, and several stone verandah pillars have become encased and almost hidden by the weirdly enveloping trunks of wild fig-trees.

The wonderful remains of these mission buildings are quite extensive and beautiful, but it is high time that something was done to preserve them from the approaching army of European settlers and industrialists. One fine slab from the front of the Church of San Ignacio can be seen in La Plata Museum, Buenos Aires.

Above San Ignacio the Paraguayan side of the Paraná is

almost entirely a primitive wilderness, and the settlements on the Misiones side are very few, and not sufficient to disturb the virgin aspect of the scenery.

The Iguazú Falls are ten miles up a tributary which enters the Paraná from the eastern highlands of Brazil. The name means " Big Water " in Guarany and certainly is appropriate as applied to the falls, which are two miles wide and about ten metres higher than Niagara, and, at least after the rainy season, surpass the famous North American falls in the amount of water thundering over them; but the Iguazú Falls can be painted neither by brush nor pen—least of all mine. The spreading deluge leaps the cliff in a mass of gleaming foam and roars down into its chasm (a depth of sixty-four metres), where, hidden entirely by mist and spray, it groans and howls as it turns immediately at right angles to fight its troubled way along the base of the rock. The glorious sunshine of the tropics, and the emerald setting, combine to make perhaps the most beautiful scene of its kind in the world. Here and there the fall is broken by a ledge a third of the way down, here and there projecting capes twist and turn, and rocky yet tree-laden islands break the view, making beauty more beautiful still in its veiling. In various places columns of spray rise high into the air and float away as little clouds.

The traveller is at once satisfied. It only remains for him to increase his delight hour by hour as he explores innumerable beauty spots and discovers falls of every imaginable variety, for, besides the greater masses, there are many lighter streams and white cascades, splashing and jostling each other, dancing down from rock to rock.

At a distance the noise of the waters rises and falls like the sound of the sea, and ever the rainbow shines in the spray as the Iguazú flings itself away in impetuous, uncalculating abandon.

It may be well here to offer a sketch of the origin of the Paraguayan nation; that is to say, of the Guaraníes, who form the body of the people and whose blood flows generously and unabashed through the highest families of the land.

The following brief notes of Indian conditions previous to the Spanish conquest are abridged and translated from the "Historia del Paraguay" by Blas Garay. Observations and notes on the Indians of to-day follow.

All traditions which refer to the origin of the nation agree that their forefathers came from far-off countries and were strangers in the land in which the Spaniards found their descendants. The oldest and most credible legends relate that one day there arrived from over the eastern seas two brothers with their families. In vain they searched for human beings in the district in which they landed (Brazil, presumably), but there building their dwellings they lived in peace and multiplied till they formed a great nation.

At length discord came to disturb their happiness, originating, it is said, about the ownership of a talking parrot—though one wonders whether more probably it was not some other loquacious animal! In consequence the two chiefs agreed to separate; Tupí, being the elder, remained in Brazil, while Guaraní departed in search of new lands in which to settle his people.

Fixing his home towards the south and west, Guaraní became the progenitor of a brave and warlike people who, daily extending their power, became at length the overlords of the vast plain which stretches between the Orinoco and the River Plate, and westward to the empire of the Incas. To this day western tribes declare that the souls of deceased Guaraníes return to lands east of the Guayrá Falls. This tradition of the common origin of the Indians of Brazil and Paraguay has in its favour the evidence of their languages, which indisputably

are merely one in two distinct degrees of development: *Tupí,* the more primitive, almost monosyllabic, preserving simply the roots; *Guaraní,* more advanced, in which the roots lose their prime significance in the meaning of new words.

Disaster overtook the nation, one legend relates, when a great flood overwhelmed the country, destroying all the tribes. Tamandaré, an ancient sage, with a few families, sought refuge in a colossal palm-tree, and so escaped. The tree was so abundantly loaded with fruit that it provided food for all until the retreat of the waters made a descent to earth possible. In course of time these people multiplied and again the whole land was inhabited as in earlier days.

The Guaraníes had not, as basis of family life, either monogamy or the indissolubility of the marriage tie. Matrimony was celebrated in the most matter-of-fact way, being reduced to the mere asking for the woman from her father, who never refused, nor did the daughter ever decline to go to the first young brave who asked for her.

The men married as soon as they were able to maintain a family, and the number of wives was only limited by their wealth. Women, however, could have but one husband, and they paid for any infidelity by their lives, being thrown from high cliffs to a steep Tarpeian death.

Women occupied a very inferior position to men, and, besides all the housework, the weaving and the pottery-making and even the cultivation of the soil were all in their hands, and when camp was moved they carried the smaller children and all the family possessions except weapons of war and of the chase. They also put up the tents on the new site. The men concerned themselves only with hunting and fighting.

At the first signs of puberty in girls they were sewn up in hammocks, small holes for breathing only being left. After

thus passing two or three days, and on a short allowance of food, they were handed over to be employed by older women in the roughest and most fatiguing labours. After some experience of this their hair was cut quite short, and until it grew again long enough to cover the ears they were obliged to abstain from all kinds of meat and to observe such strict modesty that it was considered a crime to look a man in the face. At the termination of this period they might dress and adorn themselves as they would, and were considered eligible for matrimony.

When a woman gave birth to a child, the father fasted rigorously for fifteen days, not taking one mouthful of meat and also abstaining from the chase, believing that upon the scrupulous observance of these things depended the health of the child. The fast was also observed by the mother, who in some tribes abandoned the bed immediately after delivery, giving it up to the father, to whom the greatest care and attention was paid, while she washed herself and bathed the child. If the health of the child was not all that could be desired, the witch-doctors required all relatives to join in the fast.

Primitive indeed were the Guaraníes, yet their gardens were much more extensive than those of other tribes, and many of the clans lived in villages of from fifty to one hundred families and supported themselves chiefly by agriculture. Their system of agriculture was simple: felling the trees and burning them that their ashes might fertilise the spot selected, they then made holes in the ground with pointed sticks in which to drop the seed. Their only work after that was harvesting the crop, since with so little inducement did the fertile soil yield an abundant return. It may be said that exactly in this way does the Paraguayan live to-day. There were, of course, other clans or subdivisions of the tribe, who subsisted chiefly by hunting

and fishing, moving constantly from place to place as necessity required.

Essentially united as the Guaraníes were, they were not organised into one body politic subject to a central authority, but were divided into many factions governed by chiefs in mutual independence. The chieftainship was usually transmitted from father to son, but this was not obligatory, and an unworthy successor was immediately deposed and replaced by a man of more promise.

Ordinarily the authority of a chief was very limited, and his principal function seems to have been the entertaining of visitors from his private means, like many a Lord Mayor of London. Hence he was usually comparatively poor; it was the witch-doctors who were able to amass and retain a large proportion of good things. There was an authority superior to that of the chief, consisting of the head-men of the families, who decided questions affecting the general welfare of the community. In case of war the same authority nominated the captains of their forces, to whom, it sometimes thus happened, the chief himself became temporarily subordinate. Certain signal fires and smoke proclaimed warfare, and in response the warriors quickly assembled, each with his own supply of arms and provisions. The arms were merely bows and arrows and clubs, and each man would have a small two-stringed bow with which to shoot birds with stones or baked clay pellets. Such bows are still extensively used throughout the country.

In religion the Guaraníes may be said to have been monotheistic. They venerated the god Tupá as the protector of their race, but did not erect temples nor dedicate any particular spot to his honour; they had no sacerdotal caste nor idols. They listened, however, with blind faith to their witch-doctors, who were supposed to possess influence with the many spirits—good and bad, but all uncomfortable neighbours

—which they believed abounded throughout their land. They admitted the immortality of the soul and its transit to a world amongst the stars; a journey, however, which only took place some years after death, and until then the soul dwelt on earth invisibly, yet able to communicate with human beings, friends or enemies, and requiring still articles necessary for earthly life, for which reason food, bows and arrows, etc., were placed in the graves of the dead.

Brave and jealous of the honour of their race, the Guaraníes did not submit to the Spaniards until after fighting tenaciously for many years, and in spite of their weakness, resulting from many divisions, their conquest was difficult, and was accomplished at last not so much by force of arms as by the able policy of Irala and his successors of encouraging intermarriage between the Spaniards and the natives. Their peaceful conquest by the Jesuit missionaries was also, of course, a most important factor in the settlement of the country and the preservation of the Indian race.

Wild tribes still remain, and my little points of contact with them were intensely interesting.

Small parties of the Canguá tribe twice in six years penetrated the frontier region where I dwelt. They live farther north, beyond almost impassable marshes, and probably only journeyed southwards on account of scarcity of game in their hunting-grounds. In the woods I found the abandoned site of a temporary camp—merely two or three circular patches in the forest, near together, trodden bare and flat, about three yards in diameter, and with remains of fires near, and bones. Also the nearest prostrate tree had a depression like a pie-dish cut into it, to serve as a mortar for pounding maize, carob beans, and other grains and seeds; and there were marks on the trunks of standing trees where nuts of the coco palm had been hammered to get at the kernels. The site of three separate

MATACO INDIANS IN THE CANE FIELDS.

MATACO INDIAN.

facing p. 112.

wigwams mentioned above indicated Indians of a superior tribe to some who herd many families into one huge hut, and the Guaycurús are said to make no huts whatever!

Several times I met small parties of Indians wandering about, keeping to the track when track there was, women as well as men. Being winter, the women were well muffled in furs about the body, only the neck, the right arm, the breasts, and their legs being visible. The men wore deep fringes of string around the waist and large woven blankets over their shoulders.

Indians feel the cold, although they do not seem to suffer in health from it. On frosty nights, when away from their wigwams, they will sleep unsheltered and almost naked on the bare ground like so many dogs and take no harm; but they seem utterly unable to move in the morning until well thawed by the sun, which in Paraguay, even in winter, is strong when once well up in the sky.

Once I discovered a group of Indians standing around a log that had been smouldering away for weeks, apparently roasting some small thing they had killed; and another time they were hunting for large white grubs which are found under the bark of old trees, and of which they are very fond, eating the ugly morsels after merely giving them a rub between the palms of the hand.

We took little notice of each other on these occasions, being unable to converse, and I was always afraid of having my actions misunderstood and so alarming the Indians; in which case, if women, they would suddenly vanish, but if men might act otherwise. A young Englishman, known to me, behaved quite foolishly. When travelling and lagging a little distance behind his bullock cart he met a solitary Indian stalking along, showing neither curiosity nor fear, and he had no more sense of the fitness of things than to shout out some dis-

paraging words. The Indian seemed to understand at least the unfriendly tone of them, for he at once fitted an arrow to his bow—and the white man ran and climbed ignominiously into the back of his cart.

Hearing that some Canguá Indians were encamped a short distance from me, I determined to pay them a visit, and with me went an Englishman who could speak Guarany, and a Paraguayan who was somewhat familiar with the Canguá dialect. Arrived at the place, I found that the chief's son had come and ordered the men back to their village for some reason; but he himself remained, with his wife and also another girl, who appeared to be a servant to the "princess."

The serving-maid kept at a distance, and all I noticed about her was that physically she seemed entirely inferior to the other woman. The young chief sat on his heels with his back against a post, his only dress and ornament being a fringe around his middle, made of the fibres of the caraguatá, or wild pineapple leaves, the strings of which fell aside as he sat, exposing thighs in keeping with the rest of his brown and muscular body.

His wife sat on the ground near by, her bobbed hair held by a band around the crown of her head, and with an Indian blanket over her shoulders. She had a pleasant, broad, and intelligent face, and appeared to take an interest in the conversation in which her husband and I were so awkwardly engaged.

Not much was I able to extract from the young brave, but he spoke of a fight recently with another tribe and of a prisoner which he had taken. My admiration was turned to disgust when he added that the prisoner was a little girl—whom he had sold to a Paraguayan. Of course, I might have known that *men* prisoners are never taken.

Meanwhile some slight movement caused the blanket to slip from the woman's shoulders, leaving her exposed only in

her own reddish-brown skin. I did not know whether to admire more her perfect form or her perfect composure. Slowly and unconcernedly, as an English needlewoman might pick up a piece of sewing, she, with unsurpassable grace, reached for the edge of the blanket, gave it a little shake with her small hands, and replaced it around her shining shoulders, and she looked up at me inquiringly, as much as to say: "Go on. What were you saying?"

A few days later I came across this same Indian princess with her maid gathering oranges and both wearing the proper outdoor deerskin skirt. The servant was up the tree, throwing down the sweet, golden fruit, which the princess caught in her kilt, her head turned towards me with half-frightened eyes, as if she were not certain of her right to the fruit, and apprehensive of trouble ensuing.

The undress of these dwellers in the wilds always seemed to me proper to the conditions of their lives and perfectly decent; there was, at least, never a suggestion of evil. Not so, however, did it strike a dear Scotswoman of my acquaintance, to whose house once arrived a comely Indian girl, alone yet fearless. Conversation was impossible, but the constant hunger pains of the Indians are well known, and food was given her. Then behold! a blouse and skirt hid the copper-coloured nakedness, and the guest departed from the lone but friendly shack. After having gone a little distance she was joined by an elder woman with another girl, who emerged from the wood, and an animated confabulation ensued, the result being a division of the spoils. One girl wore the skirt and her sister donned the blouse.

It will be readily understood that to me the religious ideas of the Indians were of intense interest and a subject of such study as I could give; therefore to the foregoing paragraph about the religion of the Guaraníes I make bold to add a few

remarks about medicine men, applicable at least to the wild tribes of the south of Brazil, Paraguay, and the Argentine chaco.

Indians are superstitious, which means that, not having gained a sufficient knowledge of Nature to enable them to attribute events to their natural causes, they perforce are obliged to *imagine* forces and causes; and with that desire to control Nature characteristic of man, they exert themselves to many strange endeavours.

The Indian medicine man becomes rich on gifts offered for his magical services, although by strange perversity of character he is usually the dirtiest and worst-dressed man of his tribe. The office is generally hereditary, and the implements of magic, simple as they are, consisting merely of gourds, rattles, tom-toms, stones, shells, horns, etc., are handed down for generations, and an upstart interloper would be little esteemed.

A medicine man's knowledge of herbs is not to be despised, and he knows something of massage, which he often administers with great violence, literally pounding the sick person, and always accompanying his actions with a great din. When his science ends and his imagination begins, there is some danger, and certainly a great deal of perfectly disgusting treatment.

I speak of medicine men, but, curiously enough, amongst the Mpuches of Chile the practitioners are women, and when, as sometimes happens, a man of the tribe wishes to join the ranks of the " machis," as they are called, he has to dress and live as a woman.

Of course, Indians are a robust and healthy lot of people, since infirmity brings early death. A pain is usually attributed to some foreign substance in the body, which the old quack attempts to extract by suction; but in case nothing emerges he does a little sleight of hand, triumphantly producing from his mouth a bone or live beetle or something of the kind, the

supposed cause of all the trouble. It is incumbent on the patient then to recover as speedily as possible, and such is his respect for the medicine man that he usually does.

Cases of smallpox are evidently another matter entirely, and the only thing to be done is for people not attacked to abandon the sick and clear out quickly to a great distance, taking a sinuous path through the forest, so that the disease may lose his way if he tries to overtake them.

To the Indian death usually and happily comes in a violent fashion; his failing powers betray him in battle or the chase, and sudden death is a mercy to him. Circumstances make it impossible for wild men to provide for helpless old people. I believe that the Red Indians of North America, when about to make a hurried or difficult journey, used to leave their aged people behind, provided with a certain amount of food and firing, so that death and wolves for a short time might still be kept at bay. The Lenguas of South America, however, being in the same predicament, give their ancients a good drink to dull their senses, and then tap them on the head with clubs, putting them to sleep for ever. In this manner also do they occasionally execute a malefactor—for instance, one who has killed another man of his own tribe. There is nothing disgraceful in the way the culprits are disposed of, but they are firmly assured that they would be better dead.

Death is the signal for an immediate removal of the camp, partly to avoid morbid memories and also to escape the attentions of the deceased person's spirit, which is believed to hover around the place of his death for some time. A curious exception is the behaviour of the mountain tribes of Bolivia, who buried their dead in pots under the floors of their dwellings, often tying the body into a convenient sitting posture, in anticipation of the last moment; but it may be remembered that the houses, however humble, were, and are, of stone, and also that, on account of the dry climate, a body, above or below

ground, merely dries up, so that mummified remains are constantly being found.

Amongst most Indian tribes there is great reluctance to name a person recently deceased, probably from the conviction of identity between the name and the person, so that to utter the name is to recall the disembodied soul. Therefore the deceased person is referred to in a roundabout way, and any other Indian with the same or a similar name must alter it. Among some tribes all surviving members of a family assume new names after a death, for some occult reason—a confusing custom also resorted to on some other occasions.

A name is not to be used nor uttered lightly; often an Indian, if asked his name, will disclaim all knowledge of it, not being sure what might be done with it, or to it, by strangers.

As the wild men are afraid of the spirits of the dead, so they are somewhat uncomfortable about the spirits of the larger animals which they kill. Thus, when the Lenguas have killed an ostrich they drop handfuls of feathers as they hurry home with the carcase, that the pursuing spirits might, perhaps, be detained inspecting the scanty remains left in the track, and so give the hunters an opportunity of reaching the safety of their village.

In Brazil the Indian squaws deck a slain jaguar with feathers and beads, hoping, perhaps, to appease the temper of the brute and persuade him to go off quietly to the land of shades.

During the early years of Mr. Barbrooke Grubb's long sojourn in Paraguay, the Indians with whom he had lived for some time plotted to kill him, but the terror of his spirit gave pause to their purpose. However, knowing that originally he had travelled inland from Concepcion on the Paraguay River, they ultimately built miniature huts about twenty miles apart all the way to that town from their own encampment, so that,

the fatal deed being accomplished, that heroic missionary's spirit might be induced to return by comfortable and easy stages to the white man's country. He would, in fact, have no excuse for staying in the Chaco! The plot, of course, was never carried out, and Mr. Grubb lived to be trusted and loved by the tribesmen and also to write his wonderful book about them, "An Unknown People in an Unknown Land."

The reference to the white man's country recalls to mind the fact that Indians everywhere distinguish between the Latin inhabitants of South America and Englishmen, the latter being described by a word which means "the men from the tail of the water." They liken the ocean to the hide of an animal, and in their primitive cartography stick England at the "end"; but Argentines, Paraguayans, etc., are significantly termed "the devils who always come back."

Dreams are often a source of trouble to Indians, and are the real cause of many difficulties with white people. Indians will start or delay a journey, go off suddenly on a hunting expedition, make peace or war, do a murder, all under the impulse of dreams.

The wild Indians are merely animistic in their beliefs. They feel *themselves* to be more than flesh and blood, and infer that all natural objects are similarly endowed with a spiritual reality, and hence that all around are good and bad spirits. To the good spirits, of the fish, of the corn, and of the fruit, they are grateful; and as for the bad ones, they can only try to frighten or circumvent them. Thus at an eclipse of the sun or moon the warriors angrily shoot arrows and shout threats to drive off the uncanny disturber, a method resorted to on a smaller scale to defend the camp from comparatively harmless whirlwinds that so frequently carry spirals of dust and leaves about. Sticks and stones and insults are thrown at the passing "spirit" manifestation.

Although the Indians endeavour earnestly to appease or to

intimidate evil spirits, the only outward recognition of good spirits of which I have heard is the singing of a chant to the daily rising of the sun by tribes in the western Chaco. The words used then are mysterious and, I believe, are not understood by the singers, being, therefore, probably a relic of something in the past and forgotten history of the people.

Indians who practise agriculture a little are particularly impressed with the mystery of the germination and growth of corn. The Bororos of Brazil will never touch corn until their medicine man has first performed a very special ceremony, dancing and chanting for a long time before himself consuming some.

The great mystery to the Indian mind is the preservation of the live corn spirit in or with the dry and presumably dead seed corn, so that their primitive granary becomes for the time a hallowed place. The Incas used to honour the spirit of their seed corn with hymns and sacrifices to Zara Mamá, and they also worshipped other manifestations of the reproductive powers of Nature.

Woman herself is to the Indians as great a mystery as she was to Solomon. I have described the former behaviour of the Guaraníes to girls blossoming into womanhood, and it is said that some similar custom is usual through all the really wild tribes. The girls are confined for days in hammocks, or tiny huts, or to a dark corner of the family wigwams, without food or drink, until it is considered safe for them to emerge and mix once more with the tribe. Fear is the cause of this rough treatment; not fear of her, but of the powerful spirit which evidently enters her at the time, and which might do damage if not properly countered.

The wild Indians have no images or temples, and sacrifices are only faintly hinted at by the occasional and unceremonious gift of a little pig or other present to the medicine man. The

medicine man, it must be remembered, has not yet developed into a priest, and every Indian is to some extent skilled in medicine, so that the professional man is not always indispensable. Animism is in the heart of the Indian, and the medicine man is only the expert operator who reasonably expects to be rewarded for his efforts to control Nature on behalf of other people.

Human nature is weak, and no doubt the love of power, as well as of good things, fosters some real study and understanding by exceptionally alert-minded individuals, and certainly develops their low cunning when help is still demanded after the near limit of their knowledge has been reached. "I was never poor when I was a servant of Satanas," said a Mataco ex-medicine man, who quite recently gave up his deceptions.

As Indian civilisation advanced in the Equatorial regions of the New World and wealth increased, it was possible for valuable gifts of cattle and land to be demanded for the endowment of temples and of priests. A great advance in science and arts brought no corresponding progress in the knowledge of God; rather, indeed, is seen a retrograde movement, for, instead of simple wonder and respect for the powers of Nature and attempts to propitiate them, ensued a debased orgy of sacrificial worship offered through wicked priests to hideous characters of a dark mythology, who, indeed, originally represented the known but not understood powers of Nature, but whose imaginary history were only reflections and amplifications of a savage's own delights and vices. To me the interesting feature of all Aztec and Inca magnificence of worship is its origin in personal gifts of fish or flesh to the weird medicine man of the woods.

CHAPTER VIII

INDIANS AND THE MISSION

Collasuyu is the Inca name for the territory stretching from Lake Titicaca southwards to Tucuman, and my wide-flung chaplaincy stretched at one time into that former province of the Inca Empire. Suyu is Quichua for "province," and Colla was the name given to the tribe inhabiting the district at the time of the Inca conquest.

The Indians who nowadays come down from the region of Titicaca to work during the winter season on the sugar plantations of Salta and Jujuy are called "Collas," but for some reason unknown to me they resent the name. It appears that most of the tribes had obnoxious names given to them. The large and orderly tribe called Chiriguanos surely merit a better name than (in their own tongue) "Dry guano"! And the Matacos of the forest are not called Vejoz, as formerly, because our missionaries have discovered that "vejoz" simply means "lousy." Nevertheless, I have a Gospel of St. Luke professedly translated into Vejoz.

The Collas are a fine, sturdy race—particularly the feminine part of the tribe—of medium height, but with broad shoulders and entirely strongly built bodies; with broad faces also and high cheek-bones, black eyes and hair, and a dark, copper-coloured skin that looks extremely tough. Both sexes wear the same plain, broad-brimmed leather hats with strong chin-straps, more needed on the high Andes than where I saw them, but the women cling more to old fashions and customs than do the men. The voluminous petticoats of the women are a sight to see, for the whole wardrobe is carried, one skirt

or another being hung outermost according to the occasion; and beneath appear the bare brown feet, protected from the cutting rocks by hide sandals.

That the Collas never bathe is an astonishing fact, considering that they are of quite a superior Indian race, being descendants of the Inca nation; but doubtless the great altitude of their homeland is the explanation of their objection to cold water. On the other hand, the Chiriguanos from the wilds bordering Bolivia and Brazil bathe every morning, even through the winter, men, women, and children all splashing together in their native streams or in the irrigation canals of the Argentine sugar estates; the mothers give their tenderest babes a dip and lay them out to dry—looking very miserable, but never crying. An Indian baby may be said never to cry, and that is "one up" for the wild woman!

How Indian mothers keep their babies from crying is a mystery. I heard of a Mataco mother who brought her baby to the Mission doctor for some slight operation on its head, but the little thing was in great pain and kicking and howling like a Christian, making it impossible for the doctor to attempt his work.

When this was made plain to the mother, she whispered softly to the child, which immediately became quiet in voice and limb and allowed the operation to be performed, to its own relief and the mystification of the doctor.

That reminds me of another baby, a Chiriguano this time, a little girl who at about one year of age went blind and was consequently placed at the foot of a tree and deserted by the parents. Kind-hearted missionaries chanced to discover it and placed it with friends for some months, during which time it acquired both clothes and fat. When the missionaries went to fetch the little one away she recognised them again, felt them ceaselessly, and showed her happiness. Meanwhile, however,

it had become a great pet, and although it knew no language and could see no preparations for departure, it seemed to understand, and soon from its unseeing eyes, rolling from side to side, great tears burst forth and quietly ran down dusky, chubby cheeks.

The Chiriguanos are a well-set-up people, big in bone and with flesh in abundance, some of the women being enormous, yet active and muscular withal. I particularly remember the huge proportions of one young woman emerging from cane-fields with her beau, who was evidently a half-breed and also just then half drunk. As I passed, the girl gave vent to some words, which in a minute or two I recognised as rather broken Spanish for "You are going to desert me," and, looking back to see how they fared, I perceived the man prone on his back with a mountain of feminine affection sitting on his stomach. If he ever left her it was only by her leave!

Another interesting love affair took place as the Indians were departing after the harvesting of the crop, and was witnessed by me from the verandah of the house where I was staying.

Early one afternoon a young Chiriguano passed down the road, more or less dragging a reluctant Indian belle by the wrist. It looked rather nasty, but as they had thus come straight through the factory yard evidently there could be nothing wrong, and I watched them pass on down the eucalyptus avenue towards the Chiriguano quarters.

Presently they halted and engaged in a spirited wrestling match, which quickly resulted in them both tumbling head over heels into the privet hedge and disappearing entirely. A moment later they appeared again, the young man this time holding the girl by both wrists and dragging her along with evident force. A man halted them, but allowed them to proceed.

At dinner the manager of the factory laughingly told us of a young Chiriguano who had been to him in distress inquiring whether his railway ticket would serve for a later train, as he wished to hunt for his runaway squaw. He had caught her—she, indeed, had not gone very far—and I hope that they lived "happy ever after."

I suppose about twenty thousand Indians come every year to the Upper Argentine provinces for the sugar harvest, and it suits them very well to do so, occupying their time comfortably and profitably during the inclement winter of their mountain homes. They come attended by their women, and live in encampments which they erect in the neighbourhood of their field of labour. Summer calls them back to their native haunts to plant and sow and harvest maize and beans and to enjoy their own Indian life for a season.

The Collas are nominally Roman Catholics, but their knowledge of religion is very limited, and they still retain many heathen customs. Some tribes or clans of the Chiriguanos are in the same stage of enlightenment, while others are heathen pure and simple. The Christian Indian men cut their hair like Europeans, but the heathen ones grow it very long and usually wound around the head in a tangled mass, and into their lower lip they insert "tambetas" (discs of wood or metal), which seem to have as little significance as use. I saw one heathen Chiriguano chief, a truly fine-looking man in form and features, his body, indeed, clothed in the white man's shirt and trousers, but his regal head held erect, crowned by his abundant mane, which was steadied in place by a fillet of cord. No hair adorned his sun-darkened face, but a blue tambeta shone below his lips. He came for the harvest time; not to work, but to exercise authority over his people, and to represent them when treating with the officials of the estate. Just then he desired money for his private use, as he did quite

frequently, generally proffering as his reason the need of more dress stuffs for his wives. So you see——!

The Toba, Mataco, and other tribes of the Gran-Chaco are more primitive and unsophisticated people, who come in smaller numbers from their forest homes, and generally in picturesque undress. I shall never forget the impression made on me by a couple of Chaco Indians in their leisure hour at sunset, outside their hut. The man wore cotton shirt and trousers, and a broad-brimmed soft felt hat was perched a-top of a huge stack of black hair; his tambeta gleamed as he moved slightly, cutting at a piece of wood with his sheath-knife. A few yards away a young mother sat on a grassy mound, nursing, surely, her first-born child. She had a soft, happy, placid face and a beautiful figure, which was partly concealed by a piece of blue " dress stuff " draped simply over the left shoulder, as she might wear her Indian blanket or deer-hide. Her warm, bronze skin shone in the evening sunlight, while she fondled the little naked baby, kissing repeatedly the top of its head, her eyes all the time fixed on the blue horizon or beyond.

Naturally the various tribes of Indians employed in the sugar estates have to be kept somewhat apart to avoid trouble. Some tribes are especially quarrelsome, and the Matacos seem to be so distinguished, so that when I went north in 1924 few of them were engaged on the plantations except some from our Mission at Algarrobal. A little before my time there had been a great affair between the Matacos and the Tobas on the Leach's estate. A Mataco had been found dead somewhere, and the members of his tribe attributed his murder to their hereditary enemies, the Tobas. No immediate steps for revenge were taken, but plans were carefully laid, and on a certain night the Mataco braves stole out of their encampments, evaded the " white men," and, falling suddenly on the unsus-

pecting Tobas, slew about half a dozen of them before the estate officials could interfere. They were only persuaded to desist by promises of two or three cows for an "armistice feast" and a watch and a waterproof cape for the chief; but they certainly had taken ample satisfaction.

It transpired later that the demand for a watch had been an interpolation of the wily "lenguaras," or interpreter, for his own benefit, and the incident shows plainly that everywhere there are men watching and waiting to fish in troubled waters.

The Tobas are bigger men than the Matacos and are supposed to be more advanced, yet in one respect at least they are surely a degree lower, for their huge tents are made each to contain a number of families, while the Matacos erect a hut for each. That the Matacos are fairly bloodthirsty is certain, for while I was in the Chaco news came that three men sent from the Ledesma sugar factory to persuade the clans dwelling on the banks of the Pilcomayo to come south for the cutting of the cane had been all done to death. However, I am sufficiently well versed in such matters never to blame the wild men unheard. Unfortunately we seldom hear their side of a dispute.

The Tobas, too, during my visit to the Western Chaco, distinguished themselves by fighting the Argentine frontier police near the mouth of the River Bermejo, killing the police commissary, amongst other people, and then, fleeing fast and far, they at length reached and hurriedly passed through the Mission territory, causing some alarm by their excited condition. It seemed as if they longed to wreck and loot the Mission buildings, from doing which they were restrained probably by realising that the "white men" of the Mission were friends of the whole Mataco nation, in whose territory they then were. I arrived three days too late to see all this.

That the fugitives should have been allowed a quiet passage

through the Mataco country was due to the fact that " the devil who always comes back " is the common enemy of all red men. Moreover, the tribes are not always at war with each other.

One reason for cessation of fighting is the necessity of eating and providing food for the family, which is no easy matter for nomadic tribes. The Chaco Indians hardly possess gardens, but depend on the chase and on fishing, being very expert in both occupations. They fish in various ways, sometimes striking their prey with a short horn-tipped harpoon at the end of a line cleverly made from the fibres of the " caraguatá " (or wild pineapple) leaves. At other times an Indian will tie " bejuco " leaves, of which the fish are very fond, into bundles resembling cabbages, which he fastens to a stick near the bank, rushing in with his net and securing his fish as opportunity offers.

Merry fishing parties are also held, when small nets are held side by side across the river at some shallow place, the fish being then frightened downstream by a great shouting and splashing, having previously been attracted to one spot by a good supply of irresistible bejuco.

The most curious method, however, is fishing with improvised spades or pointed sticks for mud-fish, which fish dispenses with gills and develops lungs in the dry season, enabling it to burrow through the ground while still damp and to live in its strange retreat for many months, awaiting the return of the rains. It is an ugly reptile-looking thing, but the fat with which Nature endows it at the hibernating season (so to speak) is much appreciated by the Indians. Finally, when the harvest of the rivers is abundant, fish oil seems to exude from every pore of an Indian's body, tainting the very air.

From food to drink is a short step. Water is the usual

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beverage of the aborigines, of all tribes; yet man everywhere supplements the drink of the proverbial "wild ass" with a variety of concoctions, alcoholic and non-alcoholic. Those wonderful people, the Incas, of Peru, invented "chicha," a very favourite drink of the poor people all through Collasuyú. The approaches to the city of Tucuman are lined by wide-spreading flowering trees—jacarandá, lapacho, etc.—whose gorgeous blossoms delight the eye, while welcome shade refreshes the limbs; and lo! every few hundred yards little tables stand, with clean white cloths, each supporting a bottle or two of yellow chicha and a few tumblers. At each table attends a little girl, or a big girl, or perhaps a man, for the express purpose of allaying the traveller's thirst.

Chicha is made from maize, and the orthodox method of preparation is the mastication of the grains by women, who spit out the pulp into a large vessel and leave the mass to ferment. "Hey presto!"—the real chicha! A bastard method of manufacture is now extensively practised, however, whereby the grains of maize are pounded in wooden mortars, but he who knows the use and the effect of saliva will realise that this spurious beverage can never equal the genuine article.

"Aloja" is a still better drink, which is made wherever the "algarrobo" or carob-tree flourishes, and that is all through tropical America south of the line, I think. The algarrobo is a wild tree, therefore aloja under various names is the drink of the wild tribes of the Chaco at their great feasts. The carob beans also form a valuable article of food, and Europeans have attempted to manufacture sugar (or extract it) from the expressed juice, but with little financial success.

While on this subject I may mention the acurí palm of Brazil, which is much valued by the Indians, who scale it and mutilate it by chopping off the central shoot or "cabbage" and scooping a cavity in the soft, pulpy top of the trunk. Into

this cavity the sap flows and quickly ferments, so that when the Indian returns a day or two later to his arboreal bar he may find it more difficult to descend than to get up the tree!

However, let it not be thought that the wild Indian is habitually drunken; it is the white man only who makes him so.

Our Mission station of Algarrobal is about thirty miles from Embarcacion, a place to be found on the map, but hardly otherwise, and is not far from the River Bermejo. Indeed, the Mission was first established quite near the river, very much against the advice of friends, but the raging torrent has twice driven it further back very hurriedly. A little digression may not be out of place here, illustrating conditions which render apparently foolish misjudgment very easy.

A few years ago, when Argentine Government engineers were building the railway to Embarcacion, they pitched their camp in the bed of the Rio Grande. It was the dry season, and only a slight stream of water ran its tortuous way along the wide, boulder-covered, sun-baked bed, with weeds and bushes growing luxuriously wherever any soil was exposed. The engineers were warned of their peril, but took no heed, considering it impossible that the water should rise at so great a rate as to be really dangerous to them. The sequel is that unhappily one night the flood swept down and all forty men were drowned.

Let me recall some Mission scenes, and, if we must begin with the most important, the Mission well at once emerges into view. There is nothing remarkable about the protecting wall or the posts and pulley; the wonderful thing about it is that white strangers should have known that there was water down below the surface. Indian women thankfully come to it instead of trudging a mile or two to the river, and to me it was interesting to see them carrying off the water in great

earthenware vessels slung on their backs by a band which pressed on the forehead. It is a peculiar method, but it is the mountain Indian's way of carrying loads, and seems to indicate ancient connection with Andean tribes. It contrasted very poorly with the erect and graceful carriage of the Guaraníes of Paraguay, walking with full " cambushis " on their heads.

Next in importance is the school. There were about two dozen scholars in the mud-built school-house—boys and girls who were allowed to study, being not much good for anything else. They were all more or less dressed and seemed keen on their work, and it was interesting to see a big boy patiently trying to help two very small ones over some knotty problem. Their singing of hymns (in Mataco) surprised me greatly, for clear, melodious voices rose from the little brown bunch of humanity.

The school-children are fed by the Mission, and their dining-room was a shady tree, where the youngsters stood round a rough table singing grace, and a young missionary (formerly a business man in Buenos Aires) diligently ladled out the soup in generous quantities.

The schoolroom had to serve as a church, and as none of the Indians had then been confirmed, the services consisted merely of a few prayers and hymns, with a Bible reading and an address. When speech was demanded of me I wrote out a few paragraphs—an epistle to the Matacos—which were translated for the benefit of a small but most attentive congregation. I was able to tell them of my meeting in Buenos Aires with the head of the Mission, Mr. Hunt, and that he was well. No names were mentioned *that I could recognise,* but the happy smiles breaking on dusky faces, with quick, grateful glances in my direction, made me aware of the reference to their absent friend.

The hymns, although in Mataco, were sung to their

English tunes, and my friend Doctor Bernau gave me a hymn sheet and urged me to sing, saying that the words were written phonetically. He could not, however, inspire me with sufficient courage to start.

In case some person may wish to succeed where I failed, I give "Now the Day is Over" in Mataco:

Nam la hap honatsi,
Kaila nam kana:
Owo taj imahen,
Noj hap fwala na.

Chatcha hap honatsi
Katesel nannen:
Tek ima hap Thawuk,
Natsi wuj iwen.

Thajcha, Iewen namho.
Thai yupat ta yel:
Woye taj awoye
Uye hap namel.

Kajyen hap atsina
Hap ta telaitej:
Fwaint hap wichi ne,
Hap hate penas.

Chen la hap ohuse
Tuye hap thawet:
Wet ichen la tape
The Fwis hap ma-wet.

Neche nat la yamej
Hap taj is yisan:
Wet onepha lame
Oyam is otham.
Amen.

One evening after the short daily service held just before the sun went down, Mr. Tompkins, the young missionary

already mentioned, the doctor, and I, walked towards the store or general shop kept for the convenience of the natives. A little crowd accompanied us, chiefly of young women, who pressed thickly upon friend Tompkins, who presently called out: "This girl wants to know if you will buy this net bag." "This one offers to sell her necklace," or belt, or whatever it was that each girl fished out of her blouse and shyly presented. Indians do not make such things for trade, but during my visit I had obtained a number of such articles, and so the girls had ransacked their treasure chests in search of anything which might strike my fancy; consequently I have gone down in the history of the tribe as "the one who bought the bags."

As we walked the doctor also ostentatiously fumbled about his chest, and at length produced his handkerchief for sale, but was told at once that there was "nothing doing."

A few minutes later we discovered that, without speaking, the doctor had parted company with us and stepped over to his house.

"He was annoyed that you would not buy his thing," shyly suggested one girl.

The mention of Doctor Bernau, who has already devoted half a lifetime to tender and unceasing care of the Indians, brings me to one of the most interesting incidents of my visit. The first major operation on the Mission had then quite recently taken place—a tubercular leg amputated above the knee. It was, of course, a wonderful event in the annals of the tribe, but the performance was attended with great anxiety, since the working of the Indian mind is sudden and unaccountable.

The patient was a heathen, wild fellow, brought from a distance by his friends, and it was deemed advisable to allow a few of those friends to witness the operation. When the cutting began and the blood flowed, the astonished spectators

perceptibly stiffened as if a little uncertain in which direction their duty lay.

One night I went with the doctor to dress the leg, then almost healed. With us went a comely Indian girl who was the doctor's assistant and answered to the call for "Nurse," and who then carried bandages, etc., while I held the lamp. The poor man's hut at the edge of the forest was made of a circle of saplings stuck into the ground and tied together at the top, and it looked like a huge beehive, a hole at one side having been left as an entrance. The patient lay on a platform of saplings, his matted hair hanging around his shrunken face, and his long form was wasted away to the very bones. His expression was about as hopeless as could possibly be, and so was that of his patient, frightened, and mystified wife, who sat on a log nursing a baby and caring for another small child. Physically the poor man was feeling ill, and no doubt also worrying how to provide a living for his family, now that he had no right leg at all. His fears have since been allayed, and the Indians around marvel exceedingly at the ability of the white men and at the value placed on human life—even a useless one.

Europeans in South America have not always impressed the Indians with the great value which they place on human life, and before I left the Mission station one of the Matacos who could talk a little Spanish paid me a visit to express the friendly feeling of the tribe towards me, and also to say how grateful they were to the missionaries, whose attitude towards them differed so greatly from that of the first "Christianos" of their acquaintance. Indeed, to this day along all the frontiers there are bloody encounters occasionally, on very slight provocation. The difficulty is that roving Indians simply cannot at once change their nature and habits and become householders and settled workers when white men enclose

their hunting-grounds. Neither do they feel any moral obligation to do so. But if the Indian race is to be preserved it must be made to work, and the insignificant results of missions in this direction make one profoundly grateful that cattle ranches, sugar and cotton estates do provide occupation for as many red men as may desire a more settled and industrious life.

Of course, the only useful work which an Indian can do besides riding after cattle is chopping about with a cutlass, and for this he is much in demand at the cutting of the cane. His wages are calculated in national currency, although little or no actual money passes to the Indians, who naturally have no use for it. At the termination of the harvest they receive the equivalent of what is due to them in such articles as they desire—flour, maize, sugar, hatchets, saws, knives, hats, cotton goods, belts, iron pots, tin cans, mirrors, beads, ropes, hoes, etc.—and also in animals—horses, donkeys, sheep, goats.

After the last load of cane has been taken to the crushing mill, and while waiting for the settlement of thousands of accounts, the Indians keep high festival and thoroughly enjoy themselves. Dancing goes on night and day without ceasing in rustic booths of leafy branches, the sides of which are open to the four winds, and, but for the intervening wooded hills, the gleam of eternal snows would meet the dancer's straying sight, for from many spots in the vicinity, through openings in the tropical foliage, may be seen the clear white masses of Andine peaks projecting heavenwards; but the dancing Chiriguanos look only at their partners and at the wine; their bare feet make no sound; they dance for hours without appearing to tire in the slightest degree, and when one or another departs to a little distance and lies down utterly exhausted, others replace them, and so the feast continues.

There is "taba" for non-dancers, or men who prefer a

little gamble. The taba is the knee-bone of an ox, which is thrown along the ground, coming to rest with one or the other side up, upon which chance there is extensive gambling all over the rural districts of South American republics. In the middle of a crowd a little old man keeps throwing the bone backwards and forwards. Before each throw spectators place money on the ground in front of them; others cover it with an equal amount, and the winner picks up the lot. It is a silent and serious amusement.

Naturally, at these joyous affairs in the Chaco there have been many murders or "incidents," as the Argentines call them, but the managers of the sugar estates strive to protect the Indians from evil and to amuse them as innocently as may be. I was delighted to see two Indians boxing with gloves. They minded the noonday heat not at all, and, as for their spirited battle, I will say that almost every blow got home, and victory could only rest with the hardest head. Later I met the Englishman who taught the boxing, and also a Methodist missionary who laboured amongst the Indians on the estate, who each despised the work of the other.

In due time arrive special trains to take the Indians back to the Bolivian frontier, or Chacowards as far as the line runs. I happened to be by when one train pulled into the settlement, and the consequent sudden excitement and commotion made me imagine that a riot or something of that kind was about to occur. Soon the whole yard near the train was crowded with Indians; men, women, children, babies and boxes, bundles, dogs, parrots. They filled the train and waited patiently. The train went off next day!

The Chiriguanos have about a fortnight's journey after leaving the railhead, yet I was told that, although some of them frequently were allowed to go away very much in debt to the company, they invariably returned the following year to

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facing

work off the debt, or that if meanwhile they died, some relative of the deceased Indian would present himself for the service.

However, even an Indian can be dishonest—and he can be exceedingly quick to note a white man's simplicity. On my last visit to the sugar district a new manager had been sent up to one of the largest establishments. At the end of his first harvest an old Indian went to him complaining that the office people would not let him have a horse, on the ground that the value of the horse was not due to him, but protesting that a horse he must have, for he was a son of the wilds who hated trains above all other of the white man's abominations.

The manager was so struck with the spirit of the noble savage that he ordered a horse to be given to him, and a day or two later, watching the train about to leave for Embarcacion, he noticed the old rascal, steedless, climbing into a coach, in an advanced state of intoxication.

A surprise for me was to find gipsies in force in Collasuyú; certainly not in the territory of the wild Indians, for there the gipsy would have to live on Mother Nature's bounty, whereas his custom is to live as a parasite on other races; but these strange people wander through all the half-settled districts of South America.

As a matter of fact, in the sixteenth century the Portuguese Government shipped them to Brazil in droves, along with undesired Jews and "putas," and they continue in the New World that wandering life characteristic of them elsewhere; also they have preserved their purity of race and their thieving habits, and are as much disliked by other people as ever they were.

An encampment of them outside a small town in Brazil quite outstayed its welcome; so very early one morning, when people were just beginning to stir, a few policemen marched

out and emptied their rifles at the tents, luckily only wounding one or two persons. It was a hint that needed no repeating.

In Paraguay also a large horde of gipsies appeared and alarmed the inhabitants of the district where I was, begging, tinkering, stealing, etc., and yet living in some state in their encampment and enjoying their own strange dances in the evenings. However, the wealthy and wide-flung Argentine seems to be the country of the New World most favoured by these strange wanderers; its great plain stretching from the tropics to the freezing South offers a splendid field for their incessant migrations. Every winter I saw in Cordoba and Tucuman a large tribe of Albanian gipsies, who spoke Spanish poorly, were under a captain with a Greek name, and who seemed to be loosely connected with the Greek Church. They had about forty tents. Each tent was erected over the owner's cart or other vehicle, in which and under which the members of the family reposed at night. The women preserve their national costume, wearing long skirts, blouses, and shawls, etc., of different tints of red, and being often decorated with coins and other jewellery. The traditional coal-black hair and eyes are theirs, with small features and a serious, preoccupied air. Two by two, and appallingly filthy, they go from house to house telling fortunes—past and present. I never accepted their services, but friends of mine were exceedingly astonished by their " readings " of the palm.

A curious incident was reported to me by a friend, who, living near a gipsy encampment in Cordoba, was one day alarmed to see a man being dragged around the camp at the tail of a cart, the women and also some of the men slapping his face vigorously and banging him without mercy as he passed.

At last my friend threatened to call the police, but received

the explanation that it was all right; the young victim was showing an inclination to drink and had been condemned to this shameful and painful castigation for his own benefit!

It is a curious sight to see a gipsy camp break up. Evidently the time is fixed exactly by authority, and twenty minutes before the hour nothing unusual may be noticed about the camp. Then somebody starts; down comes his tent. All follow in feverish haste; horses, donkeys, ponies, are buckled to the shafts; belongings are packed in or hung below, and women and children are packed in with them; males ride on the box, on the shafts, or on spare animals. As each head of a family is ready he whips up and starts away at full speed, dogs running alongside and dust rising in clouds. It is a brilliant piece of racing, and at the appointed hour there is not a sight nor a sound of gipsies in the vicinity.

CHAPTER IX

GOLD MINES OF MINAS

In Minas Geraes, a State of Brazil just about the size of France, gold and diamonds are picked up from the ground—when found. The arms of the State contain a mountain and two curious-looking miners apparently about to fight with picks. The mountain signifies the nature of the country, which, indeed, is a very rough plateau nearly three thousand feet above sea-level, with hundreds of peaks running up one or two thousand feet higher and scattered in great confusion over its surface.

It was quite an engineering feat to get the railway up into the State from Rio, and at one place (Mantequeira) passengers can look down and see the line looping beneath them in three places. The altitude provides generally a very fine climate.

As to the gold mines, they are everywhere, but are mostly closed down, having been hopelessly ruined by the abolition of slavery in 1888. Nowadays it is rather depressing to ride through the mining district, in spite of its beauty, for everywhere are abandoned mines and dilapidated mining villages. The Morro Velho and the Passagem mines formed a striking contrast to this desolation when I was in Minas.

Apart from the mines, there are traces of extensive gold washings all along the rivers, and still to-day may be seen poor people (a man and his wife perhaps), knee-deep in the streams, digging up the mud, placing it into wooden bowls, which they agitate with a circular motion, causing any particles of gold to gravitate to the bottom. I have also seen a nugget of gold, the size of a walnut, picked up from a mountain-side.

One morning, riding through the country with an Englishman long resident in Morro Velho, we overtook a man trudging along on foot, whom I imagined to be a poor Brazilian. A wide-brimmed straw hat crowned a head of long, black hair, and a long, black beard flowed from a dark brown face; cotton shirt and trousers composed his dress, the latter rolled up to the knees, exposing brown, hairy, weather-beaten legs that stepped briskly forward over the uneven ground.

"Good-morning, Bob," called out my companion, and as we passed a few remarks were exchanged. Then Bob's history was supplied to me.

Bob was mad. There is in the district a mine closed years ago when the very rich lode (or seam, as a coalowner would say) was lost. Bob knew where the lode was, but not the exact spot, and he had spent the greater part of his life searching for it. Naturally, he found gold—a man can do that almost anywhere in Minas—but only in quantities that hardly sufficed to keep him in beans and rice. Once or twice he had been obliged to abandon the search and return to his trade of a carpenter. Yet again and again the fever came, and back to the mountain-sides he went burrowing, starving and leaving his family to starve.

The St. John del Rey gold mine is remarkable in several respects. It is the deepest mine in the world, being approximately a mile and a half in depth vertical. At that depth, of course, the pressure is enormous, so that the rock is ever moving under it, and abandoned galleries close up, not with falling earth, but gradually as from sides and bottom and top the mountains squeeze the little passage out of existence. The heat is naturally great from pressure or motion or internal fires; indeed, the rock temperature is 120° Fahrenheit, registered by thermometers placed at the ends of bore-holes six feet deep made in the galleries.

The gold in that particular mine is not in a quartz formation, but in a slate-coloured stone entirely uninteresting to the casual observer. Fortunately the mine is dry and very little water has been struck, and as the rock is not gritty there is little fear of that mining terror, the "dust," destroying the men's lungs.

It is an old mine and was acquired by the present owners over a hundred years ago, and its story is full of interesting comedy and tragedy. Slaves, of course, did the heavy work until their liberation, but the conscientious English company hired, and did not own, them.

The old slave quarters still exist where the poor people were locked at night; not that there is real hardship in being locked in when you wish to sleep!

The slaves' chapel, described by Sir Richard Burton, has disappeared.

Its astonishing self-dependence is a remarkable feature of the mine; here are carpenters, blacksmiths, tinsmiths, moulders, saddlers, farmers, wheelwrights, chemists, civil, mechanical, and electrical engineers, etc. The "surface works" are in a valley with the 120 stamps for ore crushing and all the other complicated arrangements for securing the precious metal.

Several times I descended the mine, and the most interesting occasion was when my sister accompanied me during her short winter visit to Brazil. We had to put on overcoats made of blankets for the first part of the underground journey, which was through the usual chilly atmosphere of a cavern. Of course, they were soon discarded, to be resumed as we came out. We went down seven or eight lifts, one after another, but with considerable walks along galleries between them; smelly a little they were, but dry and lighted dimly with electricity, and also whitewashed in parts, and became hotter and

hotter as we proceeded farther into the bowels of the earth. The very last part of our descent was made in a huge copper bucket which would hold four persons standing within it; then a passage led us to one of the actual spots where the entrails of the mountains were being taken out. There in extreme heat the sweating miners hammered and picked and drilled and shovelled, all day and all night except for four holidays a year. Fourteen charges of dynamite are usually fired at a time, and we saw the fuses hanging from the drill-holes.

After leaving that place, and when climbing back into the bucket, we learnt that the charges were about to be fired, and, desiring a novel thrill, refused to ascend, but retired to a safe place, where we were soon hurriedly joined by the men, who stood around, their grimy and glistening bodies illuminated by a few dim hand lamps.

Presently a deafening series of explosions boomed in that confined space, shaking our little world and extinguishing all the lamps, for the relighting of which I had to supply a match. Much more than that might have happened, but, at any rate, soon afterwards we were out in God's sunlight.

The chief danger of the mine is of rock falling from the ceiling of tunnels and "workings"; and after blasting the miners are supposed to poke at the top with crowbars to make sure that the rock is firm, but this they frequently neglect to do. A sad and curious case happened while I was at the mine. A young Cornishman, having had two narrow escapes, looked forward to the third danger with great anxiety. One morning, feeling a presentiment of disaster, he did not go to work at his hour, but later overcame his reluctance and joined his shift. He lost half a day's work and his life. A fall of rock occurred, destined apparently for him alone, and he was brought out of the mine a mangled corpse.

A small pebble falling down a shaft from a great height will drill a hole through a man and destroy him, and a sort of "trench helmet" is provided for the men, who, however, decline the protection.

Naturally, if possible nothing but gold-bearing stone is brought out of the mine, but all is shot down upon a revolving table, where a number of black women sit inspecting it and rejecting and throwing off the table what they think is valueless. The ore is crushed to powder and washed mechanically before being chemically treated for the extraction of the last particle of gold.

Bricks of gold and silver at the end of the process are a sight to behold. Gold bricks, on account of their bright colour, are deceptive in their appearance of weight, and an unwary person might easily damage his toes when handling them, for they are exceedingly heavy.

At night armed guards keep watch on the works, and equal care is used during the transfer of the gold to the railway station, three miles off. In all the history of the mine, however, no attempt has ever been made to rob the gold in transit, although I have heard of the whole guard galloping after a deer that too temptingly crossed the path!

Water-power applied direct or for the generation of electricity has always been the use of the Brazilian gold mines; and along the steep sides of the crowded mountains are to be seen everywhere the level lines of canals ("regos") for conveying water to the mines—in use or abandoned. Some are considerable streams two or three yards across, with strong retaining banks which afford broad and comfortable paths and opportunities for delightful walks and rides. They wind and double round the shoulders of the hills, and are usually well shaded by trees of great variety and beauty, and mosses grow luxuriantly over damp stones. Where the rock has been cut to

make these channels I have several times noticed a strong smell of iodoform, without being able to suggest an explanation.

Down below in the gulley the stream splashes and shines merrily in spite of the robbery of half of its volume; yet it can scarcely be seen for the mass of vegetation—trees and shrubs bound by trailing lianas, and graceful tree-ferns standing like delicate palm-trees six or eight feet high, but with rough, fernlike stems.

Butterflies and birds of rich colouring animate the scene, and a squirrel may chatter excitedly or a ring-tailed racoon stalk by with dignity and leisure. Now and then may be seen the house of a man whose duty is the upkeep of the "rego"—a mud or "adobe" house with a surrounding patch of garden, where maize and sugar cane and beans are grown, and where stands his mill (like a washer-woman's wringer), only capable of crushing two sticks of cane at a time.

One or two paw-paw trees probably grow near the house. This is a most interesting member of the vegetable kingdom, and probably a survival of a very ancient form. It grows to a height of fifteen or twenty feet, but the stem is soft and not much harder than a cabbage stalk. In form it grows like a palm, except that frequently it has one or two branches, but only at the end of each do the vinelike leaves cluster, and close beneath them the fruit appears. There are male and female trees. The flowers of the female are creamy-white, about an inch and a half in diameter, and grow close to the stem, and produce fruit as large as coconuts. The male trees give a bunch of small, star-shaped flowers, each one dangling at the end of a stalk about six inches long; in each bunch, however, there is one female blossom, which, being fertilised, results in a fruit only a quarter the size of one from the female tree. The fruit is yellow and is of the consistency of a melon. Every

part of the tree contains much pepsin, and it is said that the leaves wrapped round meat speedily render it tender—a merciful provision of Nature much needed in Brazil.

In Minas the "capim gordo" covers the higher treeless bluffs; it is a valuable grass which in the season covers the country with the glow of its rich purple flower, giving a new beauty to the already enchanting scenery.

Miners of many nationalities are engaged in Brazil, and everywhere Cornishmen are to be found burrowing in the earth according to their acquired second nature, except they be fishermen. "Cousin Jacks" they are styled, and if the name has any meaning it indicates the strong clannish feeling which certainly exists amongst them. It is said that in Cornwall they speak of "going to England"!

It was the dialect spoken by some of the Cousin Jacks that amazed and utterly confounded me, and sometimes sent me away wondering what had been the subject of a conversation in which I had tried to take part. My memory also preserves the clear impression of a man from South Shields, whose conversation seemed equally and utterly unintelligible. Once I heard a young Cornishman getting his directions from a huge North-Country "shift boss."

"Work to the east," said the "boss" in the midst of other details.

"East of west?" inquired the miner.

"Eh?" responded the North Countryman.

"East of west?" asked the miner.

"Er—yes—east," came the response.

After a little the shift boss recapitulated his orders, to be again questioned whether by "east" he meant "east of west."

Again with hesitation he answered in the affirmative, but I could see that he was wondering how many easts there really were.

One Sunday evening before service I met a young Cornishman by the church door, and thought of inquiring whether the Prayer-Book presented any difficulties to him.

"Do you belong to the Church of England?" I asked.

"Eh?" was the reply.

"Are you familiar with the Prayer-Book?"

"Eh?" came a little louder this time.

I was in despair, but a regular member of the congregation, also from the Western Duchy, came to my rescue.

"Where's yer tutum?" he asked.

Even that question (which, in fact, filled me with consternation) had to be repeated, and then came the firm answer:

"Church!"

It was all right; he knew the Prayer-Book.

Explain that, if you can.

Nevertheless, Cousin Jacks are fine fellows and as capable of doing as fine things as anybody else. When danger confronts them in the course of their work they are at their best, and no men in war or peace could show more quiet courage and disregard of dreadful peril than the miners evince from time to time in their underground world. Sometimes a huge piece of rock falls from above, striking and smashing and pinning down a man or two without killing them outright. After the first dash of alarm their companions quietly return and with crowbars and other implements strive to free their comrades, perhaps working for an hour, with the rock above still cracking and threatening all with instant death, for of course there can be no poking to see whether the roof be firm yet awhile.

It happened that one such tried and sturdy hero had a kitten that was mangled by a terrier, and I insisted that he should drown it. He was very slow in doing so, and the act brought water to his eyes; and that, in turn, excited my

wonder and admiration, being myself, as a coachman once informed me, hard-faced, and not for nothing. "No es por nada que tiene cara dura."

It was my fortune once to present the medal of the Royal Humane Society to a Cornish miner, who, after an explosion, escaped with his gang of Brazilian workmen, but returned alone in search of one left behind. He found him lying unconscious in the heavy, poisonous gas, lifted him, dragged him along the gallery, to fall himself at last with his burden, at a point, however, where the more timid workers could reach and attend to them. It was an extremely long time before either showed signs of life, but both were saved.

Here's to such Cousin Jacks!

In Paraguay I was hailed as the priest of the freethinkers, and Brazilians more than once described me curiously.

During a long wait on Burnier railway station a man who had been eyeing me with interest for some time came up and asked whether I was not a "Vaticano," receiving from me what I considered to be the only possible reply.

"But," he insisted, "you are a priest, are you not?"

"Yes, certainly," I replied, "but we English priests do not acknowledge the authority of the Pope, and I have nothing to do with the Vatican."

"It is all the same," he replied. "I knew you were a Vaticano."

Vaticano or not, my relations with the native clergy were always very friendly. One afternoon in Morro Velho I was walking along a steep, narrow, winding, cobble-stoned street, between a friendly native priest and a native layman, when the priest began to inform the said layman as to who and what I was, explaining the points in common between the Roman and Anglican Churches, and dilating upon them with much sympathy. The comparison was, indeed, rather personal;

it was a comparison between the native church and what *I* did, said, and was.

"Yes, I know," broke in the layman; "he is a 'ritualista.'"

I was thunderstruck. Wherever did that poor little shopkeeper get hold of the expression, which evidently was new to my clerical friend?

What's in a name, after all?

"They were called Christians first in Antioch." I remembered that one day when asking a Cornishman why he never went to church.

"Because I am not a Christian," he replied.

Thinking that he had been led away by cheap literature, I asked if he were a Theosophist, a Spiritualist, a Buddhist, or Mohammedan, to which he always answered "No!"

"What are you, then?" I asked, much perplexed.

"I am a Wesleyan," he replied.

A curious incident occurred when Dr. Stirling was made the first Bishop of the Falkland Islands with jurisdiction over the Anglican chaplains in South America. The good Bishop experienced some difficulty in getting his position acknowledged by the clergy already in the diocese, and who all held licences from the Bishop of London. When, therefore, he was asked to take a Confirmation at Morro Velho, he replied that he would do so on the assurance that he would be received as the diocesan bishop.

The poor chaplain of the mine, isolated from other clergy on the continent, was quite ignorant of the difficulty that had risen. He readily sent back an answer acquiescing, and then discussed the Bishop's strange stipulation with the manager of the mine, the result being that when Bishop Stirling did arrive he was met and accompanied during the last league of his ride by a brass band and an abundant display of fireworks, *like the Brazilian Bishop!*

Besides the natives and the Portuguese, there are many Spanish and Italian miners in Brazil, and the combination of Latin blood and subterranean labour brings a considerable amount of practice to the Morro Velho hospital, and the peculiar conditions of life in Minas generally contributed to a great and valuable variety of medical and surgical work.

While the doctor and I were dining one evening a message came that a woman had broken her neck. A poor Brazilian woman had been out with her companions on the hills gathering firewood, and, returning in the usual and only possible way—in a single file along the goat tracks, with her heavy load balanced on her head—this one woman had slipped on the rough hillside and fallen on her seat and laid herself back unable to move anything but her tongue. She was perfectly conscious and could speak, but had no power over her limbs, and had no sense of touch below her neck; a pinch was unfelt.

She was carried at last to the hospital, where every witness expected to see her expire each minute. There was some delay before the doctor arrived, and a crowd of sobbing relatives had to make way for him to reach the patient.

It was, of course, a dislocated neck, and a fatal ending was imminent. However, the doctor took the woman's head between his hands and screwed it round a little, and by good luck, as he said, rather than anything else, he pulled the vertebra into proper position. The pressure on the spinal cord being relieved, the woman immediately recovered all her powers. She arose from the bed, moved freely and joyously about the room, and wanted to go home, after pouring out her gratitude for the doctor's miraculous touch, in which she was joined by all her wondering friends. The doctor, however, detained her for the night, and during the night she

died from—as the post-mortem showed—the formation of a clot of blood on the spinal cord.

Appendicitis provided another interesting case.

A young miner was taken to the hospital with this trouble, but, fearing the anæsthetic, declined to be operated on. Altogether he was a bad subject, excitable and undisciplined, giving much trouble to everybody and generating a constant high temperature.

One day he told me that he never wished to see me again, and next day he grasped my hand and kissed it, saying: "I love you now!"

At last the doctor told me that his only chance was an immediate operation—"and that a dog's chance," for it was improbable that he would be able to endure the chloroform. Would I tell him and persuade him to undergo the operation? So I talked a little with the man, who consented to be operated on if I promised to be with him all the time. Of course, the required assurance was given, and it was pathetic to hear the patient declaring that he was no longer afraid.

No time was lost. I held the miner's hand until he became unconscious, and then retired a little way from the table to pray. Again and again I said the Lord's Prayer and some others, watching the patient the while. Then I went over to the operation table to admire the deft exploration of the inert body, and back again to the prayers.

The instant the work was over the doctor felt the wrist that hung limp, and looked at me; then he counted the pulse again and looked strangely at me again.

"What is the matter? Is he dead?" I asked.

"No," was the reply. "I can't understand it at all. His pulse is better than before."

The poor boy—he was not much more—recovered consciousness all right, but only to lie quietly for a day or two

waiting for the end. He was placed where he could see the village, and the men's quarters, and the football field, and the rugged hills. Calmly so, he took his farewell and died.

"I am not afraid," he said.

African slaves, of course, were the humble backbone of mining and all other forms of labour in Brazil, and when that bone gave way attempts were made to insert new vertebræ from Asia. Chinese were contracted and settled at the mines in what may still be called the "Chinese quarters," although the Chinamen disappeared long ago. Some of them at Morro Velho were unfortunately buried when the mine fell in in the year 1886.

Only one Chinaman did I see at Morro Velho. He was old. His yellow skin was darkened with age and wrinkled like a raisin, and his small, black eyes, deep in his head, were only like extra wrinkles. Short black hair stuck out from his head as if only recently released from a pigtail. He walked well upright, but was reduced to skin and bones, on which European clothes were hung. Umbrella mending had become his occupation—an extremely useful one, too, in that country.

One other Chinaman I found at Marianna, a fleshy old basket-maker, a convert to Christianity, and a protégé of the good Sisters of S. Francis de Paul.

Shortly after my arrival in Morro Velho about one hundred active young Japanese were brought from the East. No women came, and I was told that the married men had divorced their wives before leaving Japan.

When not working or sleeping they were chiefly engaged in physical exercises or in having hot baths. They considered the English to be rather dirty, being usually content with one bath a day; and their opinion of the average Brazilian in this respect may be left to the imagination.

The venture failed. The Japs did not like the depth of the mine nor the heat of it, and the native miners hated their yellow competitors, whom they constantly annoyed by dropping tools on their heads or stealing their lamps or their lunch.

When these new parishioners of mine arrived they gave me great concern as to my duty towards them, heathen or Christians, as might be the case; however, I was assured that they were all heathen and that none could speak English except the interpreter, and so, beyond drinking excellent green tea out of small porcelain bowls with that individual, I had to leave them alone.

But ill-feeling grew apace amongst the miners. One day when a shift, including about twenty Japs, was coming out of the mine, there began a fearful row; and a heap of scrap iron lying handy, the two parties flew to arms and commenced belabouring each other with old picks and bars and chains and shovels. A number of heads were badly cracked before order was restored.

After a day or two I climbed up the hill to the hospital to see the wounded Japs, having the language difficulty well in mind and being provided with a stock of friendly cigarettes. Alas! the Japanese heads were still too battered for speech or for smoking, and their condition was pitiful. However, I found one man who lifted his head and volunteered a cheery smile, and with whom, with great patience on both sides, I was able to converse a very little. He told me his name and his number. He assured me that he did not begin the fight, but only joined in to defend his chums. He told me that he was a Christian. I could get nothing more about his affairs or his religion. At last I offered a packet of cigarettes, but he informed me that he had not smoked since his conversion to Christianity. That rather disconcerted me, and I am not sure

now whether I did rightly in inducing him to receive the packet to give to his friends.

Fortunately all the Japs recovered, but in little groups they ran away to the coffee plantations until the interpreter's occupation was entirely gone.

CHAPTER X

MORE SCENES IN BRAZIL

It has been my good fortune to find Government officials in South America polite and considerate. They have never worried me in the Customs, they have freely and voluntarily given me papers indicating that they had vaccinated me when they had not done so, and on one occasion in Buenos Aires I was allowed to land at night from a river steamer with a fair-sized handbag, which was not opened, when even ladies were not allowed to take their little wristbags ashore. Plainly they are men of understanding!

Once, however, during the war, a wretched registrar of German descent and sympathy kept me and a whole wedding party waiting for an hour, of set purpose, and that purpose was to annoy. He succeeded fairly well, and after my religious service was over the young miners of Passagem would have "ducked" the offender had not their plan been discovered and forbidden.

Real Latin-blooded officials, however, are always polite. In Asuncion del Paraguay, during a revolution, a young officer was sent to post soldiers on the flat roof of the railway manager's house, but was refused admittance by the mistress of the house, on the ground that her husband was not at home to give his permission. Of course, the soldiers went up to their appointed place, but I was told that the officer's distress at having to be so rude was very evident.

Government officials may be polite and obliging, but it is well to scrutinise carefully any document or certificate with which they may supply you.

Immediately after my appointment to Morro Velho (after the chaplaincy had strangely been allowed to stand vacant for thirty-four years) I had to marry a couple who had been married by the registrar some time previously, and on examination the civil certificate proved to have the month of June entered instead of July. That was bad enough, but later in Passagem I married two sisters, one shortly after the other, and when the second wedding took place it was discovered that the bridegroom and best man had been woefully mixed up at the first wedding. How the matter was arranged I never found out.

Morro Velho, however, had long ago gone one better. During the war a certain Englishman went home to join up, and I shall never forget how he told me of the decision to do so. He bemoaned the fact that human nature was not better after two thousand years of Christian endeavour. It was evidently no use being altruistic—no use trying to do anything; he was inclined to think that a couch of roses and a bowl of wine, etc., was what a man had best strive for. Then he said he was going to join up, adding that, as he always fainted at the sight of blood, he did not know how he would get on. There was, however, red tape difficulty for him after arrival in England. First of all, he had been born in Brazil, and that country, being much under the influence of Germans, was rather " suspect " early in the war; then his certificate of birth, although evidence of his British parentage, was in Portuguese, and had to be translated by competent authority; and the last impediment was that he had been registered as a female child!

In Brazil, as in other republics of South America, if laws are not carefully enforced, they are at least framed carefully with a laudable attempt to reach perfection on paper. Thus at the registration of a child's birth its name, sex, and *colour* must be given, black, brown, or white, with other details, to the special indignation of English mothers.

Brazil boasts no colour line—there is everywhere a beautiful merging of black and white—but there are the extremes; at one end are a few people who look as if their blood flowed direct and unmixed from ancient families of the Peninsula, and at the other a great mass of negroes showing all the marked characteristics of African tribes—Herculean muscular development, shining black skin, ridiculous wool, snow-white teeth, sometimes filed to points like shark's teeth, giving shocking smiles; and the musical speaking voices of many young negroes are very pleasant indeed.

There is no national or racial question of colour, yet there are individual heart-burnings. I had a servant-girl who ranked as "white." She was very religious and sang on great festivals in the choir of the parish church, and she informed me that there were no less than three choirs of girls in the church—a black one, a brown one, and a white one. It is one of the duties of the parish priest to determine into which choir each singer must go. In the cemetery there is no distinction of colour, but the civil certificate of burial has a line for the colour of the corpse.

There are a few West Indians in Minas, who naturally speak English as their native tongue, and usually speak it very well indeed. They are said to be quite a puzzle to the negroes of Brazil, who speak of them as "black Englishmen." Near the mines many servant-girls understand a little of the English language, but seldom try to speak it; men, however, will sometimes proudly attempt it. A choleric friend of mine had a man-servant of long standing, who was, indeed, quite fluent in English. One day the man asked for an increase of wages, and when a reason was demanded, exclaimed:

"Sir, have I not endured your impertinence faithfully for five years?"

Anyone familiar with Portuguese idiom will understand

the unfortunate literal translation perpetrated by him, which, however, being recognised, only produced a burst of hilarity instead of a storm.*

Slavery has left its mark on the coloured people; they are (grim memory) ridiculously afraid of dogs. A tradesman coming to the house and being threatened by a small dog hurriedly climbed a shrub in the garden, only to discover there a nest of vicious hornets; but in spite of the hornets he remained up the tree shouting.

Also the negroes' lack of manners contrasts strikingly with the excessive politeness of the poorest people of Latin blood, which is not surprising seeing that so recently they were treated as mere animals.

The mention of slavery brings to mind certain entries in my church registers, recording the baptism of privately owned domestic slave girls. For example:

> "1830.—Sep. 26: Catherine; negress; slave of John Alexander."
>
> "1833.—Dec. 22: Rosa Cora; slave girl of Col. Skerritt."

At the mines there was both charity and piety.

There is wild life in great variety in Brazil, of course, and even at the mines people may see something more of it than jiggers and ticks.

A very fine wolf was trapped in the neighbourhood and sent to Morro Velho as a present for two German naturalists a little before the war. The question of possession was settled by one man agreeing to take the skin and the other the bones; but the animal was alive in a bamboo cage, and how the division of the spoil without damaging either hide or skeleton

* Impertinencias = exactions.

was to be accomplished was not easy to see. At last the medical officer of the mine offered his services, he being very obliging and also anxious to test the curaré poison with which the Indians tip their arrows. The almost instantaneous effect of the poison, when received through a wound, is well known, yet it is said to be harmless if swallowed, and it was this latter fact which the doctor desired to verify.

Before lunch pieces of meat with the curaré inside were given to the wolf, and after lunch I went with others to see the corpse; but the wolf was still standing up and filling his cage, his long red body standing thirty inches high. He had taken a small piece of meat only, having suddenly, perhaps, got a suspicion of foul play.

Ultimately he was drowned in the swimming bath, inside his cage, ignominiously.

This is the aguara, or maned wolf. He does not hunt in packs, and his food consists of birds, rabbits, etc., and "fruta de lobo," very common in their season, hanging like hard, green cannon-balls from the parent bush. A learned English naturalist not long ago referred to this animal as "the ghost fox," and said that "until recently it was thought to be extinct." No traveller through Brazil could have given him that impression.

Once in Morro Velho I saw a hawker offering, amongst other things, wolf skins for sale. On a fence by his temporary pitch hung a notice to the effect that the skin of this wolf is a cure for rheumatism. There was no direction as to how it should be taken.

Wolf teeth suggest serpent's fangs. Did not witches grind and mix them?

Poisonous serpents have a fascination for me, and I have a close acquaintance with some of them, especially with the coral snake. This snake is about three feet long at most, and

is very brilliantly coloured along its whole length, with a succession of black, red, and yellow bands, some having an additional band of white.

I had heard that the coral snake was deadly, also that it was harmless, and could only harmonise the conflicting statements by supposing one sex only to be venomous. Many times I had caught them and carefully poked their mouths open with twigs, but never had found any fangs.

The last one which I caught I carried home alive. My usual search for fangs had been in vain, and I carried the thing by the neck, allowing it to gnaw my finger-ends with its little teeth. After carrying it about half an hour, and when quite near my house, I was changing it from one hand to the other, perhaps carelessly, and suddenly felt a fang buried in my finger-end. That settled one question. Only one more point remained: Was its bite mortal?

The pain instantly set up was excruciating enough, like the sting of a hornet, but of concentrated hornets. I sucked the wound furiously, to little purpose, and in a moment my finger was inflamed and swollen so that I thought it would burst. The poisoned field spread, and the pain was most intense at the joints of my hand and wrist. In three minutes, as near as I can remember, the elbow began to ache dreadfully, but by that time I was in my house cramming the coral snake into a bottle. Then I started off for the hospital, but immediately reflected that if in three or four minutes the poison had got to my elbow, it would only take six or eight more to reach my brain or my heart—whichever it was bound for. Moreover, I could not reach the hospital in that time, although I intended making a short-cut through the scrub, and there was a clear probability of my lying hidden and unconscious in that scrub. Therefore I stood by my telephone and waited a little to see whether the poison would reach to the shoulder, which was

FOLIAGE IN MORRO VELHO.

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to be my signal for ringing up the doctor. The poison had seemed to weaken as it travelled, and so it did. I never rang up the doctor. Two hours later the only sign of what had happened was a little red speck on my finger.

Afterwards I discovered that there are at least two species of coral snake in South America: one has fangs in front of its mouth, with which it strikes like any other poisonous snake, and is, indeed, very dangerous; the other fellow (the one *without* the white band) has also fangs, but they are fixed and placed where its wisdom teeth should be, so that it can only inject the poison into something already well down its mouth. The position of my finger alongside its jaw had enabled the snake to jam one fang into me—and right glad I am that it was but one.

The coral snake feeds chiefly on smaller snakes, and I have seen one with a mouse halfway down its gullet. My bottled prisoner, being subjected for a time to the heat of the sun, ejected a smaller brown snake which it had swallowed.

The possibility of an endless succession of long and glorious rides on mule-back over the mountain wilderness around made life pleasant in Minas.

After a visit to a great friend, the manager of the Morro Velho mine, who was then living in tents at the Lagoa Grande, a lake high amongst the hills about twenty miles from Morro Velho, I returned to my duties. My host rowed me across to where a mule awaited me, and by-and-by I looked back to give a last wave and saw his tall form standing there still on the shore, with the placid surface of the lake behind him, shining like silver in the morning light, and all around grassy undulations swelling gradually upwards until they lost themselves in high ranges and rugged peaks that bounded the view in every direction. Few trees were there visible and no

human habitation; only the wind and the sunlight played together in freedom and peace. Nearer home the track led through a wood which extended far, but was not very dense, neither was there much sign of animal life. However, we (I had a man with me) saw traces of wolves—their excrement, as usual, on a piece of rock.

Presently we passed close to an old-fashioned house in which lived some employés of the mining company; and a little beyond this I suddenly reined up, having espied a black object, a man lying amongst the bushes a little distance away. He was certainly dead or unconscious, and I jumped from my saddle, calling to my man to do likewise. The recumbent figure still breathed. "But don't disturb him. Who knows what he may do?" cried my companion.

However, I raised the fellow's head, and by-and-by he came to himself a little. He was sick and destitute and was walking to his native place, Sabará, to die; but he could go no farther—he must die there. And verily to die seemed all that he was capable of ever doing.

Then a man living in the house just mentioned rode up, whom I persuaded to take charge of the stranger and afford him some shelter until the end should come.

On we journeyed, all that long and glorious morning, through varied and beautiful scenery, until we arrived at the busy, picturesque, whitewashed Morro Velho embowered in trees and guarded by its rampart of mountains.

A day or two later my duty led me to the native charity hospital, dedicated to Our Lady of Lourdes, where sick, destitute, dead-beats, were cared for without further qualifications. It was a poor, ramshackle building, but tolerably clean, and, being built on a hill-top, was bright and airy. The woman in charge—the matron—was well spoken of by the inmates. She had a singular history.

Having been married for a number of years without getting any children, one day a wire of the electric power line broke and fell across her arm with dire results, for, after the agonising pain was over, her arm was useless. However, after that she bore a fine lot of boys, reared them, buried her husband, and devoted herself to the hospital work.

A verandah, of course, ran around the hospital, and one end of it was enclosed for a few feet, protecting a small altar, with an image of Our Lady surrounded by artificial flowers. Every evening the altar was exposed by opening the folding doors, and patients who were able and disposed to do so flocked to the space in front, while the one-armed coffee-coloured matron led them in prayers and litany for the sick. My dying traveller had been brought to that hospital, and from there he was buried.

There were two native churches in Morro Velho, the parish church and a chapel of ease; and with the big-bodied priest of the latter establishment I was on very friendly terms. He used to do a good deal of deer shooting. Our services were at the same hour—eight a.m.—and his bell did for us both, but whereas I had music and sermon and extra hymns as well as the Communion, he had only a said service and very rarely a sermon.

One Sunday late in the morning I met him riding home, with his cassock tucked around his waist. He had been saying Mass that morning in the open air, before a huge cross erected on a peak overlooking the town, and he had preached, he said.

"What did *you* preach from, the gospel or the epistle?" he asked.

"From the epistle," I replied.

"Oh, I preached from the gospel," he said. And then: "Let me see—what was the epistle?" And he commenced

murmuring the epistle in Latin to discover the drift of my sermon.

I was shocked to recognise, not the epistle of that day, but of the previous Sunday, as I thought, so evidently one of us had got astray in the calendar, and, fearing to find myself as the culprit, I said nothing.

When I reached my study, however, I discovered that while the English use is practically the original one of St. Jerome and fourteen hundred years old, the Roman Catholics have at some time displaced nearly all the gospels or epistles by one Sunday.

Would I lend two milreis to pay for the Confirmation of her little brother? (This from my servant.)

The boy was about seven years of age. I gave the money. I paid for his Confirmation.

"Thank you, sir," said the girl. "Now you are his godfather!"

The two milreis had to be paid beforehand and the receipt shown at the Confirmation service, and that was all the preparation required.

At last the venerable and decrepit Archbishop of Minas arrived with his coadjutor and one or two chaplains.

There were very many children to be confirmed and there was a tremendous crush of gaping sight-seers. So great was the press of people in the church that the clergy were continually and vainly imploring the men "for the love of God" to stand back and allow the Bishop to get to the candidates. I was told that two infants were killed in the crush. Finally the service was continued in the open air, and also extended over another day. In the end the Bishop left many children disappointed, but with the assurance that their tickets would serve on a later occasion.

On the second day, as the Archbishop was to be at the

house of my friendly priest, I determined to pay him a visit, and by chance met him outside the church and was introduced; afterwards we walked slowly together to the priest's house. He was a very old man and feeble, with dark face and negroid features crowned by close-cut, snow-white hair.

Near the house stood a group of poor women waiting, who knelt to kiss the Bishop's hand, and then each offered him one or two milreis, which he handed to his chaplain.

At the house, and in the room which we first entered, a few children first knelt, and then stood to sing a long hymn in Portuguese, each verse of which ended strangely with the words "Viva Jesus!" (literally, "Long live Jesus!")

On and on sang those dreadful voices, but at last His Grace decidedly and unceremoniously called out, "Basta! Basta!" ("Enough! Enough!") and the music came to a sudden stop. The little ones then received a present of apples and were dismissed.

From the fat priest I learnt that, not two, but one child had been suffocated in the crush at the church. My boy was not confirmed at all, so my two milreis were lost—or gone before.

The unheard-of charge for Confirmation completely shocked the more educated natives, and, indeed, I never heard of such a thing except among German Lutherans. However, since the disestablishment of the Church in Brazil the clergy are sometimes hard put to live, especially in country places, where, indeed, nowadays there are many churches without priests.

CHAPTER XI

THE VICAR'S FUNERAL

SHORTLY after the Confirmation the vicar of the town died, and it was plain to me that I should not treat the event with indifference, so, dressed in my cassock, I went down to the house of mourning, at least to leave my card and thus express sympathy with the Church in Morro Velho on the loss of its local head.

The very humble dwelling was full of people, amongst them being the dead priest's relatives, and four priests, and two Sisters of Mercy. When I arrived the body had just been placed in its coffin and lay there in purple vestments and with biretta on, hands clasped, eyes closed, with long lashes black against the pallid cheeks. There was a crucifix at the head of the coffin, a candle at each side, flowers all round.

I knelt and prayed silently and then passed into another room, where all the other priests were seated.

The priest in charge (my old friend) was concerned because I had not brought my surplice, and offered to lend me one if I would stay for the funeral. I decided to remain, although it entailed a long wait, which I passed partly in observing the ever-increasing crowd of people of all classes and colours who congregated thickly in the street before the house and partly in friendly conversation with the clerical brethren, one of whom was a Dutch Marist from the capital of Minas, who showed a good understanding and appreciation of Anglican Orders.

Amongst the Brazilian priests was one who could not understand me at all, so proceeded to investigate, gently cate-

chise, and quietly probe into my position. After having his suspicion confirmed that I was not a Roman Catholic but an Anglican, he stated that of course we had no bishops. I quietly put him right on that point, and he subsided for a little; but a moment or two later he turned to me again, saying:

"Your bishops were made by Henry VIII."

At this the Dutch priest turned quickly round and said very decidedly, throwing out one arm as he spoke:

"No, these men have their bishops from the Apostles."

"Ah! then they are Catholics," agreed the toasted Brazilian, still rather perplexed, I thought.

Meanwhile a Sister of Mercy brought a surplice for my inspection and laid it by for me, after seeing that I was content with it.

Feeling that perhaps my innocent Brazilian friend might get himself into trouble with his bishop when news of my co-operation reached headquarters, I carefully implicated the most able man of the lot, the Dutch Marist, by taking him aside and expressing my thoughts and offering to find some excuse for immediately leaving, if he himself felt that it would be better so; but he warmly urged me to remain.

"We want you to remain," he said.

Then came the funeral, at which I was allowed and urged to take my place as a priest and do exactly as the others did, except, of course, for the chief officiant, who wore a black and gold cape and took the lead in all things. Several religious societies marched first with their insignia and with their banners *down* and hung with crêpe, winding along the street and round into the church. After them walked the officiant with a priest on either side, and another priest and I just behind, all carrying long candles and chanting funeral psalms as well as we were able.

In church all banners were raised, the body was laid upon a catafalque draped in black and gold and placed in the nave before the high altar. On the south side of this the priests lined up and continued the service, assisted by male singers and musicians in the west gallery over the main entrance. The body was censed and also sprinkled with holy water by each priest in turn, after which we made a procession in single file around the catafalque, bowing at the processional cross as we passed it. This part of the service being over, we proceeded to a chapel on the north, where a grave had been dug, and waited while the parishioners, no doubt, filed past the coffin to gaze once more on the late vicar's features.

There was, in fact, an unseemly noise of conversation from the crowded church, where afterwards I learnt that one or two women had fainted, and the chief officiant, my old friend, got more and more annoyed until at last he bawled out at the top of his voice, "Calla boca!" (literally, "Shut your mouth!"), but the effect was neither instantaneous nor complete.

However, at last the body was borne to us and a few more prayers were said, after which the coffin's hinged lid was raised that the priests might kiss the dead hand or the robes of the deceased. Then our candles were extinguished and we repaired to the vestry to cool down.

I am glad to say that the whole native population was immensely pleased with my act of sympathy, and that the bishop of the diocese, on hearing of it, sent me a present of a small pectoral cross.

As a further instance of the good relations between the native Catholics and myself, I record the fact that my festal chasuble was made especially for me by the nuns of Morro Velho, and beautiful work those women can do! Unfortunately very shortly after receiving it I was taken suddenly and seriously ill and hurried to the hospital, and when being

put to bed had to arrange for a friend to take payment down to "Sór Helena" lest she should be cheated by my hasty death.

As I recall the religious life of the Brazilians, there emerges a medley of memories of things very fine and doings very weird. The fine things are, after all, simple Christian acts of faith and charity which do not tempt description here, yet let this sketch of life be understood to have plenty of good, generous feeling in the background.

In England life is eminently reasonable and proper—no one ever sets fire to another man's house, neither does he set fire to another man's heart!

The duty of godparents is taken very seriously, although not very spiritually, by Brazilians. A visitor to the country soon learns that godparents are never too poor or pressed for room to open their houses to godchildren left unprotected, considering it their natural duty to care for all their material needs. Did I say "not spiritually"?

Outdoor religious processions are a great feature of life in Brazil, and they are always well arranged, and are carried out by men, women, and children without the slightest sign of self-consciousness. In Lent sometimes penitents may be seen carrying large stones on their heads, and I have seen men wearing coats of sackcloth—but not next the skin!

In Advent crowds of girls in their spare time spread over the hills collecting wonderful mosses and ferns and orchids or anything that may serve to decorate the "mangers" which they build up in their houses with care and skill. A child Christ is laid there and also (according to the state of the family purse) the Virgin, St. Joseph, the Three Kings, sheep, cattle, ducks, drakes, and anything that might have been at Bethlehem. Not every house, but many, have these mangers, and at Christmas-time the populace wanders from street to

street, entering every open door to admire and speak a friendly word.

A singular event in Morro Velho was the annual crowning, at St. John's tide, of the king for the year. In some manner the "king" was elected by and from the lower (mostly coloured) orders of society, taken in procession to church, he walking inside a wooden triangle carried by attendants, and in church he was solemnly crowned by the priest. The chief duty of the king was to spend money that day on fireworks and free drinks.

"The Golden Bough" with its forced ideas is inevitably brought to mind by this strange feast. It was the participation of the priest that amazed me.

Raposos was the railway station for the Morro Velho mine, which lay a league away from it. The name is that of a mining town that used to be; but only the débris of it remained on the banks of the Rio das Velhas after the exhaustion of the alluvial gold deposits. The river, two hundred feet wide, appears quite wonderfully to make its appearance and disappearance on the scene, through the steep and rugged ranges encircling the place, and the railway keeps the river company for a considerable distance.

Near the miserable hamlet is a diminutive and dilapidated chapel, in which, it is said, the first Indian baptism in Minas took place; and it may be so indeed, for the very earliest Portuguese gold-seekers made their way from S. Paulo to this district. The name, Das Velhas, means "old women," and was bestowed in honour of some Indian squaws discovered with and in the river. A half-bred Indian girl, at one time my servant, told me that the Indian name was Macurí.

At the discovery of Brazil all the beautiful highlands were teeming with Indians, whom the Portuguese considered as a provision of God for their needs. Slaves were required, but

the Indians never would be slaves, and so a struggle ensued which ended in the extermination of the tribes in that part of Brazil and the importation of negroes.

Having heard that there were Indian rock-paintings at Raposos, I set out with a guide to find them. My guide was a native of the place, about forty years of age, and he said that his mother had told him that "the ancients" had told her that the paintings had been there before the memory of man.

By-and-by we came to a place on the hillside where an overhanging rock stretched out, on the underside of which the primitive artists had indelibly recorded their love of art for art's sake, as it seemed to me. Particularly in one place a slab of rock about twelve feet long by eight feet high was covered with petroglyphs. The colours were few—black, red, and yellow, without variation of shade—and the designs also were simple and few, repeated over and over again with slight changes, and usually they were each about a foot square. Perpendicular stripes of recurring colours was one, and four or five concentric circles another, of the most common designs. In one case the perpendicular lines were all slightly curved, and in another bent at an acute angle. Only in one case were lines horizontal, and they occurred across perpendicular lines, making something like a cross.

The marvel is that, after being exposed to tropical rain and sun for so long a time, the colours were still clear. On close examination it proved that the drawings were not made with paint "laid on" the rock, but by some colouring matter which penetrated and stained the stone. It could not be scratched off. So high were the paintings that a platform must have been used by the artists.

There are several such painted rocks in various parts of Brazil, and some authoritative opinion is that they are preg-

nant with meaning, although no one has been able to decipher them yet. An Indian's belt is usually covered with markings, equally unlike our idea of hieroglyphics, which yet record his deeds or the acts of his tribe.

On the rock which I saw at Raposos there is also the carving of the impression of a bullock's foot, which, of course, if not a freak of Nature, must have been cut there since the advent of Europeans.

High up above these interesting remains, on the very summit of the hill, were a number of steep shafts sunk through the rock. They were very low and narrow, but up them and through them men had been forced to carry loads of stone and of earth until they succumbed. Gold—the deadly treasure of the aborigines!

Peace and Spanish influenza came to Morro Velho in November, 1918. We had suddenly heard of the ravages of influenza in the Brazilian seaports, and truly the accounts were appalling; but we felt sure that the deadly factor was our old friend "yellow jack" working together with influenza. In Rio half the population was said to be down with it at one time, and it carried off about forty thousand people from that city. The difficulty of attending to such numbers of sick people may be imagined. Indeed, it was beyond human power to nurse, feed, and doctor them, and the burial of the dead taxed the resources of the authorities; coffins were not to be thought of; bodies were lying in the streets from one day to another—some lying where they had fallen, others having been put out of dwelling-houses by the surviving inhabitants, who were unable either to keep them or dispose of them otherwise. Carts went about collecting bodies, jogging off with every completed load to the cemetery, where huge pits had been dug to receive their grim and putrefying cargoes.

Horrible as all this may sound, there are persons who will recognise that this paragraph is written with restraint.

We knew of all these ghastly details, yet never thought other than that, like yellow fever, the plague would be confined to the coast, because the coast mosquitoes cannot cross the mountains. Even when the first case or two appeared in Morro Velho, it was only the doctor who felt alarmed, but in deference to him schools were immediately closed—and a few days afterwards it would have been impossible to hold any classes, so astoundingly rapid was the progress of the scourge.

Days passed. Whole families were prostrated. Deaths multiplied. Food ran short. Still more affected people were brought to the town from the countryside.

The scene at the hospital was extraordinary, for every day and all day long there were queues of people waiting for medicine for their relatives and friends, with a soldier keeping order. Tubs of "medicine" were brewed and ladled out to all alike into whatever bottles or utensils had been brought. In the little town (of twelve thousand inhabitants) conditions were very serious. The work of the mine was never officially stopped, but for several weeks very little indeed could be done beyond keeping some of the crushing stamps working so that the people might not be oppressed by the unusual silence. The only subject of conversation was the plague, and measures to be taken for fighting it.

Our assistant medical man went down at once with the influenza, so the senior doctor had much ado to cope with the epidemic and to keep himself in good condition. However, he received very effective help from a West Indian coloured man who had studied medicine at Edinburgh. I also acted as a supplementary pair of eyes for the doctor,

meeting him every day after a round of visits. At first I only saw the English bachelors who were ill, but later I included cases where both husband and wife were stricken down—it must be mentioned that no servants "lived in"; besides, they were all sick.

The streets were empty except for people carrying medicine, or food, or stretchers, or coffins. Relief workers went about in the rain with great solemnity. Butchers and bakers and grocers and milkmen were all either dead or ill in bed.

My only servant vanished at last, and indeed it was no surprise to me when, returning from my rounds one afternoon, I found my bungalow locked up. The girl had cooked my dinner and left it on the stove. On the kitchen table was a soup tureen and a cloth wherewith I might handle hot dishes. In the dining-room the table was properly laid for dinner, so I had to carry each course there, consume what I desired, and carry off the remainder, until the coffee was reached. I never troubled to ring for myself, although the bell had been thoughtfully put in its usual position.

After that I "did" my house and boarded at the company's restaurant, but even there things were going badly, for cooks and waiters had nearly all succumbed to the "Spanish 'flu," and the bakery was closed. The kitchen was being managed by a superior native book-keeper who strove well with his novel duties, but only allowed one piece of bread to each person per meal, and served not what people wanted, but the dishes he could supply. The condition of the poorer natives was pitiful. Naturally, they had no stock of provisions in their hovels, and were soon on the shortest of short-commons. The one great provision store of the town had all the attendants sick in bed, and my friend Padre Antonio did excellent service behind the counter. Of course, he knew the

circumstances of almost every member of the community, and dealt out simple foodstuffs as needed by the throng of poverty-stricken and plague-stricken debtors. His accounts must have been confused—if he tried to keep any—but the owner of the store was a kind-hearted and wealthy Brazilian and a good Catholic.

In many houses all the inmates were prostrated, and in some cases whole families were passed on to the cemetery during the epidemic. Men went searching for these miserable people, helping them as much as was possible, if still existing, and trying to induce them to open windows to admit fresh air. As a matter of fact, the Brazilian does not appreciate fresh air, even when in health, and in sickness he avoids it as much as possible, especially during an epidemic which he deliberately endeavours to "shut out" of his house. Having convenient mud floors, some of the people refused to go out of their rooms for any reason on earth, and violence was threatened to him who talked of fresh air.

That typhus or some other complication should arise was the daily dread of our medical officer.

By-and-by a large hall was taken and provided with beds of sorts and soon filled with people, who were at least supplied with soup while alive, and with coffins when they expired. The coffins were brought right to the bedside as needed. Many patients were delirious, and the groaning and the raving of all those frightened sufferers made the place hideous, and the stench was dreadful. One lusty negro jumped into a coffin before his time, and could not be got out without overturning him on the floor, to his great indignation.

The worst of the plague was over before three weeks, and it vanished rapidly as it came. The number of deaths in the

town was only two hundred and ten, although practically the whole of the inhabitants were infected with this mysterious disease.

The memory of that visitation will not quickly fade from my mind.

MORRO VELHO. A MINING TOWN IN BRAZIL.

CHAPTER XII

AMONG BRAZILIAN MOUNTAINS

Sir Richard Burton rode from Morro Velho to the mining town of Passagem de Marianna, situated on a tributary of the Rio Doce. I determined to make the same journey in the opposite direction, although the railway now connects the two points by a circuitous route which, from time to time, it was my duty to take. On this occasion my luggage was reduced to the minimum, except for two large boxes of chocolates meant for girls whom I hoped to find in an orphanage on the way. It being then the middle of the rainy season, those cardboard boxes ran risks!

By rail the journey took about six hours, and from Burnier Junction to Passagem—two-thirds of the way—the ride is one of great beauty, for instead of running along the steep valley of a river, as do almost all Brazilian railways, the line follows a range of mountains, being cut alternately out of one or the other side of the crest, affording ever, to right or left, a wide panorama of tumbled mountain scenery, grassy slopes, rocky gorges, tree-choked valleys, and rushing torrents. Above soared the beetling crags of the storm-swept mountain heads. Strange winding roads, mule-tracks merely, showed here and there, and tiny hamlets clung to the shoulders of the hills and flashed their humble white walls in the tropical sun.

In the rainy season, however, the orb of day provides heat but little light, for layer on layer of cloud spreads over to the horizon, sweeping and swirling and falling and steaming and pouring. The rain is warm and the earth is

warm and pillars of steam arise, like smoke, from various spots, and the forest canopy provides for the traveller one huge vapour bath.

Presently, the line entered between steep grey cliffs, and down below, a stream furiously accompanied us as we crossed and recrossed far above its troubled surface, passing from tunnel to tunnel, making short cuts in the race. Always the grade was downwards, steadily the cañon darkened. Ferns, flowers, grasses, and mosses flourished exceedingly; tree-ferns rose luxuriantly from favoured spots, and the "cuaresma" shrub, clinging to the cliffs, flung its purple petals to the world.

Close against the end of this cañon stands Ouro Preto, the ancient capital of Minas, "dug in" amongst the mountains and scrambling over rocks—with its large railway station, its fine stone churches, its School of Mines, and its monument to the patriotic dentist who will ever be known in Brazil as "Tiradentes." Crooked streets climb about in all directions, bordered by dilapidated old-fashioned houses, built on the street level, but with their back-ends held up from the sloping bank by high piles. A very pretty and lively place it was in times past, and the inhabitants must have been kept in good physical condition if they took much exercise afoot in the hilly streets of the town. Since the removal of the capital to a more suitable site at Bello Horizonte, Ouro Preto had quietly decayed.

The tumultuous river broadens out and flashes hurriedly round the city. From the right bank the steep sides of Itacolomí rise two thousand feet into the sky, accomplishing five thousand eight hundred feet above the sea. Its rugged summit, attended, as it were, by a page-in-waiting, a huge upstanding cliff, a twin peak, frowns across the country towards its stately companions, the mountains of Piedade and

Caraça. Itacolomí is a Guarany name meaning "the peak with the little one," and from it is derived "itacolomite," a geological term for a soft and strangely flexible sandstone, found, perhaps, nowhere else, a piece of which, bent easily with the fingers, will regain its position on release. It is a very uncanny substance to handle—soft and cold.

Leaving the derelict city, the railway plunges down the Valley of the Carmo, descending one thousand feet in half an hour's slow travelling to Passagem, a small town lying on a little plateau which holds the jagged ranges somewhat apart.

Here are gold mines, for gold has been obtained from this district for three hundred years continuously. The river banks are burdened with piles of water-worn stones, heaped together by adventurers who patiently passed all the soft bed of rivers through their "bateas" or wooden wash-bowls. The whole countryside is pitted and scarred by ancient diggings, traces of which extend to the very crests of the hills, changing their rounded outlines into ugly worm-eaten designs. In places there are huge flights of steps cut down the mountain slopes two hundred years ago—steps about six feet by four feet, upon which rough blankets were fixed, and, water having been taken by canals to the required spot, an immense mass of soil was washed down, the heavy particles of gold being retained by the woolly surfaces of the blankets.

At Passagem my proposal to return by mule (or, as the local expression is, "by land") at that season of the year was tenderly scoffed at; nevertheless, mules and a guide were generously promised. Afterwards my host (the manager of the Passagem mine) offered to accompany me, and then others joined, so that finally we set out, six men and eight mules.

My church services being over, we met at four a.m. on the Monday morning at the Casa Grande. It was pitch dark and,

of course, it was raining, as the various members of the expedition stumbled towards the rendezvous. Hot coffee and sandwiches had been kindly provided, so we who were punctual, breakfasted a little, while final preparations were being made.

As the mules munched their corn, my host, booted and spurred and riding-whip in hand, strode up and down the verandah gazing at the watery darkness and murmuring: "Madness! Madness!" The lady of the house herself presently appeared on the balcony to cheer us off as we were mounting, and directed a rubber cape to be brought for use over my Burberry, her husband having a similar cape only. Here let me offer thanks for that rubber cape—it is the only protection against tropical downpours. Our hostess also urged the need for umbrellas, and if we had given way on that point would surely next have pressed hot-water bottles upon us!

It was five o'clock and dawn was breaking before we rode off into a degenerate drizzle, which even allowed us to admire the grey and glistening landscape cut by the shining flow of the Carmo River. The muddy track went slipping from hill to hill, skirting huge rocks, and splashing through mountain streams. Cloudbanks kept the atmosphere cool and the animals went along in fine form. Now and then the rain would descend heavily, but for that we were prepared, being duly grateful when things were not at their worst. In all that little world no one stirred abroad except ourselves—birds and beasts, wild and domestic, contentedly remained in their shelters.

We passed Santa Ana mine, which, with so many mines of low grade stone, had closed down at the abolition of slavery, thirty years before. The hauling gear of this mine, however, in hopes of better times, was still kept oiled and

working, and it was curious to see the noiseless, useless running of the wheels.

About eleven a.m. we reached Camargo, a village that once was a mining centre, but which had for a generation been hopelessly collapsing. The cobble-stoned streets, even with gaps of mire, witnessed to the industry of former days, and the dilapidated houses, many of them unoccupied, sometimes exhibited laboriously carved ornamental woodwork and other signs of rude opulence. Here and there, indeed, in the forsaken mining towns of Minas, in weather-worn stonework, appear the armorial bearings of knightly families now extinct or extinct as such. There and then, in Camargo, doors and window-shutters were fast closed against the driving rain, and dogs, hens, pigs, and other animals crouched, wet and miserable, in the doorways; only one or two faces looked out in great surprise as our cavalcade clattered by.

In the largest old tumble-down house of the village we had our midday meal and thoroughly enjoyed the chicken, beans, and rice, and "farinha"—a meal or flour made of the mandioca root and eaten dry with all meats—and we drank strong, hot, black coffee with satisfaction.

Sitting around on solid old chairs, we admired bits of "colonial" furniture, and doors of hardwood, hand wrought, with locks and keys and hinges of ornate ironwork, and nails, all hand-wrought by slave labour. We discussed the possibility of reopening the local mines, and kindred subjects, while the deluge continued.

Tapirs were common in that district, and we were shown our host's long, lean hunting-dogs, also a fox-terrier which, a few days before, had grabbed a tapir by the ear, and, refusing to let go, had been carried, like an ear-ring, a good distance into the forest, until a terrific bang against a tree brought him to the ground; and we saw the skin of a young

tapir, which is not black, but brown and marked with lines of white spots.

By the exercise of great strength of will, we sallied forth at last into the downpour, passing the parish church, in which service is now rarely held, and in front of which stands a stone cross about twenty feet high, and, emerging from the town, plunged into the sodden country. Shortly afterwards the weather cleared, and we had but little rain the rest of the day. Up hill and down dale, over rocks and through forests we went in Indian file, mile after mile, hour after hour.

Once we lost our way. I was leading, the guide being some distance behind, and we entered a woodcutter's track, proceeding for a mile or so until arrested by the discovery of a jaguar trap. It was a hut, built of stout posts pierced only by a low doorway. Above this opening hung suspended the heavy door, with a chain passing from the supporting catch to the centre pole of the hut, and so to the bait—a tempting goat. It was practically a huge rat-trap, and the jaguar would imprison himself when dragging at the goat.

Our guide came galloping to retrieve us, and neglected his duties no more.

We had determined to pass the night at Cattas Altas, at the foot of Caraça, to be ready for the ascent in the morning, and therefore pushed on past Infeccionado. The track led up a narrow valley, down which a flood of muddy red water foamed along a boulder-strewn course, and tore from side to side in its tumultuous rush to lower levels. We crossed that stream six times, for our only road lay on its water-worn banks, and the precipitous sides of the hills afforded no way for our caravan. Our pack-mules went right under water once, and having the chocolates in mind, and the orphan girls, I tackled one mule and encouraged him desperately.

At last we scrambled out of the gully, which, at that season, afforded a suggestion of risk, and, after uneasily crossing a hill of horrible, thick, yellow clay, we found ourselves on hard rock at the base of the peak dominating the district, and now towering above us like an immense blue stone. I had been told to expect this remarkable tint, yet the appearance perfectly astonished me. The base was hidden by the grey vapour, and, riding along picking my way over rocks and logs, I happened to look up and was startled to perceive the vision of beauty and of majesty in the sky. The fog was very light, and the gigantic cliff thrust itself almost perpendicularly upwards two thousand feet into regions where the rays of the dying sun at that moment played upon its aged stone buttresses and battlements and cast faint shadows along the fortress front. From the vantage point gained by us, the fog, too, shrouding the base of Caraça, changed from grey to snowy white.

Aguas Quentes, the name of a hamlet, also describes a natural feature and indicates the volcanic nature of the district; but we were little interested in Warm Waters, being wearied with the heavy, steamy ride through the woods and longing greatly for Cattas Altas, which we reached about six p.m.

The name of the village is a mongrel one, half Guarany and half Spanish, and signifies "High Pits." The neighbouring mines are no longer worked, yet the cluster of houses around the church presents an air of prosperity, of courage, and of interest in life. The church is larger than is now needed. The interior of the walls is entirely hidden by finely carved wainscotting of cedar, brightly painted and gilded at the east end and down the sides as far as the altars extend; and the western portion, *sans* paint, showed very handsomely in its simple, generous warmth of natural colour. My inspection of this building, however, took place on the succeeding day.

On our arrival at an extraordinarily comfortable hostelry—a rambling, old-fashioned establishment and the centre of various industries—our wet boots were filled with maize and put in the oven, and we engaged in a comfortable hot sponge down in our bedrooms. My friend, the manager of Passagem, and I were at that time, for different reasons, "temporary teetotallers," but each revealed to the other that his luggage consisted considerably of a flask of whisky, and so we were happily soon ready for the table. The table was laden with "home products," particularly attractive being the wine and the cheese. A courteous, white-haired old gentleman, mine host's father, came to sit with us a little after dinner, but sleep quickly drove us off to bed.

In the morning the rain came down furiously, and only at eleven a.m. did we pluck up heart to resume our journey; then mysteriously we were all provided with special head protection—umbrellas, pink parasols, etc.—adding an appropriate touch of tropical colour to our procession, and proving my former derision of such objects to have been based on ignorance.

We were mounting Caraça. The unfolding beauty of that ascent defies description. Ever we rode up wooded slopes and looked across verdant valleys and range upon range of tree-clad ridges to the higher serried crests. Rain and mist swept fitfully across the view, and the wild weather seemed to be breathed forth from the untamed scenery. Here and there the wounded mountains showed great patches of bare, red soil through the enfolding green mantle, where the soaking rain had torn away masses of earth and rock and flung them headlong down.

In the distance we observed a white, perpendicular streak and speculated as to what it might be, finally agreeing that it was probably a singular outcrop of white quartz. Mile after

mile, up and up we clambered, slipping and splashing, never getting anywhere, and certainly not to the monastery for which we were bound.

Wondering more and more why such an inaccessible place had been chosen for the retreat, we settled down into a dreary mental state, half consciously, half mechanically guiding and encouraging our plodding mules. At last a turn in the track brought us right in front of a huge waterfall, still a mile or so away, but thundering down between wooded sides in a violent descent of one hundred yards or more. We crossed the stream where in the depth of the ravine it caused the rocks and trees to cover themselves with moss and fungi, and, gradually ascending, we soon obtained a near and magnificent view of that milk-white column of foam. Halfway down the fall the water was caught in a rocky cup, which sent a huge mass of it spouting upwards, to rain down again in glittering splendour. The roaring of the fall filled the valley, and with the roar a deeper note arose as if the hills in anguish groaned a protest against the intruder. The waterfall was then to me a very impressive sight, but in the dry season only a feeble trickle of water moistens the face of the cliff.

At last the monastery of the Lazarists burst into view. It is the virtue of mountainous country that so much of interest is brought before the traveller suddenly from round a cliff or over an eminence, and so our weariness was then confronted with the white buildings of the monastery grouped around a Gothic church, and all gleaming in the sunlight which flooded the country late that afternoon.

We were courteously received by the Father Superior—a Dutch monk—who invited two of us to his study to taste liqueurs made on the establishment. Room was provided for all our party. I was given a princely apartment used by bishops and by the high dignitaries of the Order, which con-

tained a four-post bed surmounted by a mitre and crosier carved in wood; and there was a small oratory at one end of the room.

The mine manager and another man slept in Crimean beds in a lumber-room near me, and the rest elsewhere. We travellers dined by ourselves, and were grateful for the simple meal, during the consumption of which the Father Superior insisted on waiting at table. This early dinner was also our lunch, and immediately afterwards the Father went off to "supper" with the hundred boys who were being educated there. The boys all wore cassocks, which many of them tucked up for a little football in the courtyard while light lasted; other boys made a hideous noise practising on brass wind instruments; and a few plodded away at lessons—the whole making quite a familiar picture in spite of strange externals.

Later in the evening we met most of the monks—at least eight of them—in the common-room. At first we all sat solemnly at a huge round table, upon which reposed in lonely state "The Acts of the Holy See." By-and-by the ice thawed, and we passed a pleasant hour, harvesting details of the retired life of the brethren and giving news of the outer world, especially of the war. No papers were received there, and visitors were rare indeed, so that our communications caused some excitement. It happened that I had just been in France myself, and most of the brethren were French. As duty called them away, the monks embraced me, and one whispered: "We pray for the victory of the Allies!"

So to bed.

Shortly after six a.m. I went to Mass, and by-and-by the boys trooped in, all except two or three wearing surplices. In the middle of the service a long litany was introduced, and as the boys all made their Communion the Mass became very

prolonged, and I quietly stole away, to find my party and the Superior waiting for me to go to breakfast.

I believe that the object of our visit was a thorough mystery to the good monks, and surely no solution to the question of why we were travelling at that season, and why we ascended Caraça to go down again, was ever found!

We gazed longingly at the Carapuso, the very highest pinnacle of the mountain, then swept by rain and not at all inviting, and, taking affectionate farewell of our hosts, began to descend. Down past the flashing fall we went, and then took the track to San Bento, a place where there is a small railway station near an abandoned gold mine. The weather had been kind all the morning, but just as the hamlet came into sight Jupiter, becoming aware of our intention to board the train, viciously emptied his reservoirs upon us! Never was there a more blinding rain, and we just groped our way to the station through a falling flood.

From San Bento the two "camarados" returned with the mules as best they could, and we trained to Caethe, a small town reached after a beautiful journey of two and a half hours down the gorge of the Cuyabá River.

There is a fine church at Caethe; the huge monoliths of which the doorposts and the pillars are formed filled me with amazement. The church was built by the Marquis de Pomba of famous memory. It is plain that the Portuguese grandees remembered the distant province from which they derived their wealth.

There was no hotel at this stopping-place, but a Brazilian friend of one of our party generously offered hospitality to us all. In the morning new mules were provided, enabling us to make the ascent of Piedade, then towering two thousand feet above us. Some distance below the summit was an orphanage for girls, founded forty years before by Monsenhor Dominguez,

who still feebly directed its fortunes. He had also founded a Sisterhood, whose members cared for the children and also engaged in various charitable works over a wide region of Minas. I remember Monsenhor telling me that a certain parish priest had asked for the help of some Sisters. "But I will not send them," declared the old, white-haired ecclesiastic, "for that priest is not a good man."

The ride up the lower slopes of Piedade was most enjoyable; the sun was out, but rain was always visible somewhere careering across the landscape. By-and-by the way became steep and very slippery, and rain also overtook us and kept us company—and our umbrellas were gone!

A long ride, like a sea voyage, is always best at its conclusion, and we were happy to see the red roofs of the orphanage appearing amidst the trees, and presently to ride with great clattering into the cobble-stoned courtyard. At the noise of our arrival a door opened and discovered the friendly figure of a stout old priest, Padre Antonio from Morro Velho, who opened his eyes and mouth in astonishment, but immediately showered a warm welcome on us all.

My good friend Monsenhor Dominguez was looking aged and infirm; indeed, he was recovering from some illness, and sat on a sofa *sans* cassock, but wearing a greatcoat. His purple stockings, pulled up outside his trousers, slid down continually to his slippered feet. Our arrival took his mind off his troubles somewhat as he exerted himself to do the host, insisting on my using a pair of his purple slippers while my boots were being dried. Maté was passed round, and whisky was miraculously produced, and wholesome, animated conversation buzzed around the humble whitewashed walls and cheered the few quiet old prints of Popes and saints which were the only ornaments.

After some time a Sister produced my two orphans, and

the boxes of chocolates, happily uninjured, were presented on behalf of Mr. G. Chalmers, and the delighted girls ran off to show their gifts to the Mother Superior.

A wrinkled old woman, sister of the Bishop of Goyaz, was staying at that "asilo," and her interest in us was intense although not vocal. By-and-by, after much fumbling in the folds of her dress, she brought out a small, carved wooden box and proceeded to make an offering of snuff to the chief members of our party, destroying thereby, for a time, our interest in any other matter.

Our need for food, perhaps, taxed the resources of the asilo, but I hope the inmates did not suffer on our behalf. From a point of vantage my fat priest and I looked down into the huge kitchen, where by the window a stout Sister in her black frock and spreading white headdress was busily stirring the contents of a large pot. Being observed spying, my friend made signs indicative of hunger, whereat the Sister waved her spoon in a fashion that might have been interpreted in a variety of ways.

After lunch we were shown over the whole establishment—the crowded dormitories with their humble beds, the primitive schoolroom, the chapel, etc. The nuns and girls did various kinds of needlework, but their remarkable speciality was the conversion of banana fibre into a silklike thread, with which they did embroidery. It was made from the leaf of the plant. The altar hangings and the priests' vestments were all ornamented with this substance, which looked exactly like real silk.

By-and-by the Monsenhor (a Monsenhor is either a bishop or a priest entitled by the Pope to use episcopal style and dress) offered that the girls should sing to us. A Sister sat at the piano, and two more helped the girls with the piece, which was very long and had been sung to me before. Monsenhor

himself seemed very pleased with the music—beaming with satisfaction, beating time with his bony fingers, and occasionally lifting up his own old voice. It was, indeed, his composition, and was intended to express the joy and peace experienced by a woman on joining his Sisterhood.

The rain ceased in the afternoon, but thick clouds clustered around the peak still above us, and we contentedly saddled up and descended.

That was the second time we had declined to attempt the very crests of the mountains, but it was partly because some of us were not thoroughly enjoying ourselves; one man, for instance, had the sole of one boot inconveniently curled up by the heat of the oven. The mountain-top, however, is always worth a visit; in clear weather the very extent of the view and the feeling of height gives a pleasurable thrill, but the view is not beautiful, for the whole country below lies flat like a map. In the rainy season, however, that extended view is greatly intercepted by moving curtains of cloud, which open and close continually, giving weird glimpses of distant peaks and towns. In the dry winter season there are sights of peculiar beauty, for just before dawn a fog settles thick in every river valley (and practically every Brazilian valley has its stream), extending upwards two or three hundred feet, and with the surface as level as a table-top. When the sun appears his rays are reflected from this surface as from a mass of gleaming snow, and solid and opaque as snow the fog appears, until presently the sun causes the uppermost layers to gently stir and rise a little and drift in the scarcely perceptible movements of the air, rolling along, breaking against black peaks of rock that rise like islands from that milk-white sea; and gradually the whole fog-bank slowly and quietly gets into motion and floats along the valley—up or down the valley, as the case may be—its own increasing lightness and the gentlest zephyr carrying

it over hill and down again, and on and on, until it vanishes into air.

That is a sight of winter in the tropics, but we were travelling in very different weather, slipping and sliding, stamping and stumbling, splashing through streams, pushing through seas of dripping foliage.

A simple meal, a hard, clean bed—what more does a man need after a hard day's riding? Before the kitchen sounds were stilled in our kind host's house we were asleep.

Both the Superior of the monastery at Caraça and the aged Monsenhor returned my calls that year—no doubt having other reason for being in my neighbourhood.

Monsenhor Dominguez's visit was very interesting. One day I met our stout old village priest, who eagerly informed me that Monsenhor had arrived and intended visiting me on the following day.

"Oh!" I exclaimed, "he is so old and infirm that I will see him now instead."

Off we went together to the "adobe" cottage, and I chatted with the old man, who, however, insisted on paying his visit to me.

I happened next day to meet Monsenhor Dominguez a little distance from my house. He was dressed in a white or cream-coloured cassock, with cape, and wore a broad-brimmed white felt clerical hat, every article being buttoned or braided in purple. A striking figure he was, and we two doubtless made a strange picture as, leaning on my arm, he tottered down the steep, cobble-stoned road, the stout ecclesiastic following behind, taking snuff the while. To my consternation the dear old man collapsed on my verandah, where, luckily, a cane sofa received him. He did not faint away, but sat there quite overcome. I offered water, wine, etc., but the only thing he required was "caxaça," a native rum, of which

I had none. The fat priest pulled a small bottle out of his cassock pocket, and a little drink enabled Monsenhor to proceed into my house. I remember those men noticing an effeminate wealth of easy chairs in my study, and also some religious pictures, which they referred to as "our pictures."

Monsenhor stayed but a few minutes—and that was his last journey but one. R.I.P.

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